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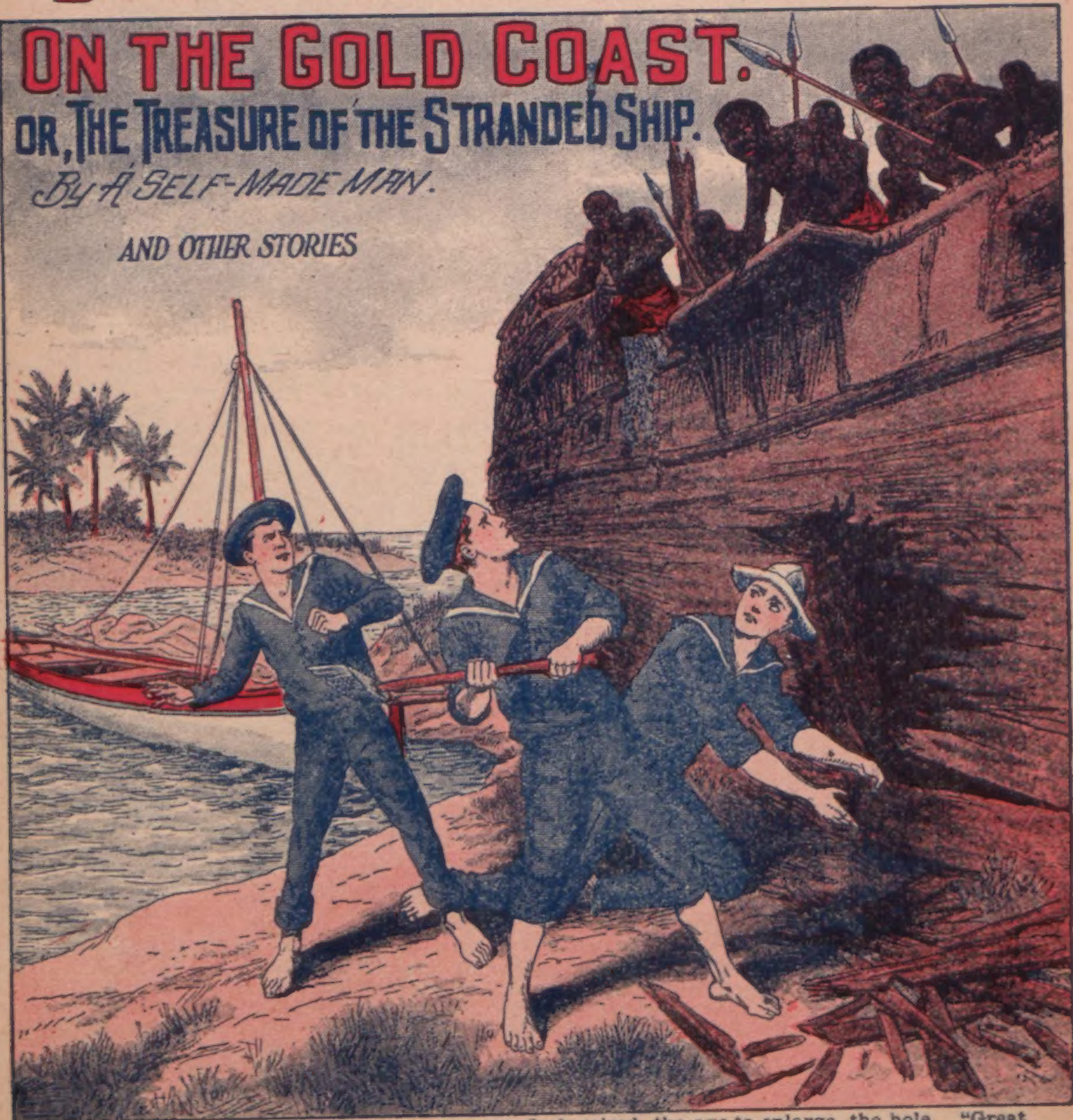
FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

ON THE GOLD COAST. OR, THE TREASURE OF THE STRANDED SHIP.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

AND OTHER STORIES



"Look! look!" cried Will, in a startled tone, as Jack raised the axe to enlarge the hole. "Great Scott!" gasped Jack, glancing upward. The deck of the deserted old hulk was alive with savage-looking black men armed with spears.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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ON THE GOLD COAST

OR; THE TREASURE OF THE STRANDED SHIP

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—Comrades in Peril.

"Begorra! it's a foine pickle we're in, so it is!" said Larry Lambert in a lugubrious tone as he sat with his chin buried in the palms of his knotty-looking hands, and his elbows supported by his knees. "Where are we at all, at all, I dunno."

"Don't worry, Larry; we'll get out of this somehow," replied Jack Harding in a confident tone.

"I hope we will," interjected Will Tupper in a not over-hopeful voice; "but this blamed fog may last for hours yet."

The three boys, all about the same age, and dressed in picturesque sailor togs, were seated in a small sloop-yacht that was drifting aimlessly in the midst of a thick fog somewhere off the south shore of Long Island. They had started from Southampton that morning for a day's cruise offshore in Will Tupper's craft, the "Sunbeam," and were on their way back late in the afternoon when the wind dropped, leaving them almost becalmed miles from the land. Then, to their dismay, the sea mist, dense and clammy, rolled in from the ocean and enveloped them in its opaque folds. Will was the son of a New York broker whose family was summering at Southampton. He was a good-looking, gentlemanly boy, and something of an amateur yachtsman. He was passionately fond of the water, and had brought his sloop-yacht down to the Long Island summer resort with him, and spent most of his time aboard of her.

Jack Harding was a strong, hearty, fine-looking young fellow, who lived with his widowed mother and two sisters in a modest cottage in the suburbs of the town. He was an experienced boatman, though he had never been fortunate enough to own a craft of his own. Tupper, looking for a capable person to help him sail his yacht, had made his acquaintance and hired him for the season. The two boys took an immediate fancy to each other, and, in spite of the difference in their social stations, soon became chums. Larry Lambert, a young Irishman not long in America, had been employed by Will's father to act as a general help about the cottage he had taken for the summer. Will had taken a fancy to him, too, and whenever he could secure his services carried him off with him and Jack in the yacht. Tupper dressed his crew of two like himself. in sailor

suits of dark-blue cloth, and round, flat caps, similar to those worn by the sailors in the American navy, so that the three lads presented a natty appearance whenever they went afloat.

"The fog won't last forever," said Jack in reply to Tupper's remark. "These summer fogs usually break up in an hour or two when a breeze stars up. We can't be more than three miles from shore, and even if we drift off a couple more it won't take us long to make the harbor with a good wind, for this craft is a hummer when she gets down to business."

"It's so late in the afternoon now that it may get dark before the mist lifts," answered Will.

"It won't be dark for three good hours yet," replied Jack.

"Well, let's get into the cabin out of this muck," said Will, getting up from the semi-circular cushioned seat in the cockpit.

"We can't all go in at one time. One of us must remain out here and keep a strict watch, for we're lying in the track of steamers and big vessels bound for Sandy Hook, and unless we keep our weather eye lifting there is a chance of our being run down in the mist," said Jack.

"Howly Mother!" groaned Larry. "Sure, if we don't go to the bottom I'm thinkin' it's lucky we'll be."

"You've got good ears, haven't you, Larry?" said Jack.

"Faith, I have."

"You ought to be able to hear an approaching steamer while she's still half a mile away. Get your pea-jacket and sit here with your ears cocked to all points of the compass. If you hear the least sound of a vessel or steamer in the vicinity yell out to us."

"And what will yez do thin?"

"We've got a revolver and some red and blue lights in a locker. We'll make our presence and our position known in a jiffy," replied Jack.

Larry got his pea-jacket and seated himself near the tiller with all his senses on the alert, while Jack and Will took their seats in the cabin, after the former had lighted the reflector lamp in the forward bulkhead. The "Sunbeam" was a fine craft in every respect. The cabin was paneled in polished oak with gold trimmings. The lockers were of oak, covered with silk plush cushions, with a soft fancy pillow embroidered with flower designs.

signs in the centre of which the letter "S" stood out in relief, at each end of them to lounge on. These lockers could be turned into beds if occasion called for the change, the bedclothes being stowed away in the lower of the two lockers under each. The yacht was fitted with a deep semi-circular keel, which did away with a centre-board and its casing, consequently the cabin was clear of any obstruction.

The disadvantage of this arrangement was that the boat couldn't travel in shallow water, but she was able to stand up well in a heavy blow, for her lead-tipped keel acted like a centre-board. Her buoyancy was further assured by four airtight copper tanks in her hold, so that she was practically unsinkable unless run down and cut in two. A small extension mahogany table was screwed to the centre of the floor, and there were four cupboards, two of which were filled with china and glassware, carefully secured against ordinary breakage when the little vessel rolled and pitched in a heavy sea. The other two cupboards were packed with a supply of canned and potted goods, glass jars of fruits, pickles, and such like.

There was also an ice-chest concealed from sight, while the centre of the hold between the copper tanks was divided into two compartments by a narrow oblong fresh-water tank. One of the compartments was used as a store-room and larder, the other for the storage of various odds and ends. The forepeak, which was entered from the cabin, was quite roomy, with a deadlight on either side, and was fitted with a fair-sized oil stove with four burners, and every necessary article and kitchen utensil of the best make. The yacht, while not intended for ocean cruises, was capable, if properly provisioned, of being navigated across the Atlantic at a pinch, with small danger of being lost, even in a hurricane, under expert management. To save time from hanging heavy on their hands Will got out his checker-board, and the two boys, both good players, were soon absorbed in the game. An hour passed and then Jack said:

"Larry has been on duty long enough. I'll go outside and relieve him."

He donned his pea-jacket and left the cabin.

"Get under cover, Larry. I'm going to stand watch for the next hour," he said.

The Irish lad was well pleased to get in out of the fog, which was denser, if anything, than ever, though he had some misgivings as to the propriety of his presence in the cabin, for he did not stand on the same footing with Jack aboard.

"How are things, Larry?" asked Will when Lambert walked into the cabin.

"Sorra a bit better, sor. Worse, if anythin'. The air is loike pay soup, so it is. Sure, I belave yez could cut it with a knife."

"Sit down and make yourself at home."

"What on wan of thim lockers? Won't I sp'ile the cushions, sor?"

"Don't worry about the cushions. Take off your jacket first, for it must be damp. Hang it up on one of the hooks in the bulkhead. So the weather is worse than ever, and here it is five o'clock. We may have to stay out all night."

"Sure, I hope not. I've slathers of work to do at the house before and after dinner."

"You won't do any of it before dinner, I'll war-

rant, and I doubt if you get home before it's time to turn in."

"Oh, murder! The cook will be after givin' me a good bastin' with the broomstick whin she claps her eyes on me."

"No, she won't. She couldn't expect you to walk back when we're becalmed out here."

"Walk, is it? Faith, I couldn't swim the distance if I'd been born a dook."

"No, I don't think you could. We must be all of five miles from Southampton by this time."

"If we're not thin I'll be thankful."

"Oh, we can't be so far offshore as that. We were only about three when the fog caught us."

"But, sor, they say the tide is moighty powerful round here, and it was beginnin' to set offshore whin the mist came on."

"The fog has been on for two hours," said Will thoughtfully.

"Yis, sor; all of thot."

"If it carried us away at the rate of three miles an hour we're out of sight of land by this time."

"Don't say thot, sor!" replied Larry with a look of alarm. "Sure, if we lose soight of the shore it's lost entoirely we are."

"Nonsense, Larry. We've got a compass aboard, and would be able to make Long Island again with that, even if we were fifty miles or more away."

"Is that a fact? It's a wonderful instrument, ain't it, sor?"

"Yes. A vessel couldn't get along without it."

"The little finger always p'int's wan way, don't it?"

"Yes—to the north."

Will concluded to go into the cockpit and talk with Jack, who was more congenial company for him, so he donned his pea-jacket and left Larry alone in the cabin.

"I guess we're about ten miles from shore now," he said.

"What makes you think we are?" replied Jack.

"I figure that the tide has carried us six or seven miles out."

"I was thinking that way myself. We shall probably have a long sail back when the wind springs up."

"There is no sign of it springing up at present."

"Apparently not. I'm afraid this is an extra bad fog."

"It may hang on for several hours yet."

"It is possible."

"It's likely to be long after dark by the time we reach the harbor. As it is after five now we'll have to eat on board."

"We can do that, for we've plenty of grub. This is a bang-up boat for a cruise. You're a lucky boy to own such a craft."

"I always keep her well provided in case of an emergency. We wouldn't starve if we had to remain out here a month."

"I shall miss you and the boat when you go back to New York. If I owned such a yacht as this I'd be the happiest fellow in the world."

"Maybe you will some day."

"I don't think so. I expect to have to work hard for all that comes my way, and a boat like this would be a luxury away beyond my means."

The boys talked a while longer, and then Will said he'd set Larry at work getting dinner. Larry was quite a fair cook, as he had been obliged to

do culinary work in his home among the bogs of County Sligo, and he had picked up a whole lot in the kitchen of the Tupper cottage, for his bump of observation was well developed. Will set the table, and at half-past six called Jack to the meal, while Larry was sent outside to stand watch.

CHAPTER II.—Out of the Fog at Last.

The repast consisted of a plentiful supply of bacon and eggs, fried potatoes, soft bread, cake, crackers, marmalade, preserved apricots and coffee. Jack and Will had famous appetites, and got away with their full share of what was in sight. When they had eaten as much as they wanted they went outside and sent Larry in to do justice to what was left. He cleaned up the bacon, eggs and potatoes, and finished the coffee and the marmalade. Then he removed the dishes, washed them and returned everything to its proper place in the cupboards and lockers. The fog had cast a gloom about the surface of the sea, and this grew more somber as the sun neared the horizon. By the time Larry had tidied things up it was quite dark, and the mist showed no signs of breaking up. The dead calm had a good deal to do with this condition of things, for it needed a wind to disperse the fog. The ebb tide which was carrying them farther and farther from the coast would last about five hours.

When the yacht finally got out of its influence it was twenty miles south and east of Montauk Point, the most easterly point of Long Island. The boys, however, had no idea where the boat was, and all they could do was to wait for a wind. The tendency of the flood tide when it came on would be to carry the boat northward again, but not necessarily in exactly the same direction whence it had come. There are many currents, and the boat might be whisked off to the northeast as well as toward the northwest. When Larry came outside again Jack and Will retired to the cabin, for now that it was dark the chill in the air from the fog was considerable in spite of the fact that it was close to the first of August.

"Nine o'clock," said Will, looking at his watch. "We're safe to stay here the greater part of the night."

"Looks that way," replied Jack. "What shall we do to amuse ourselves?"

"We might try checkers again. You beat me both games before; I'd like to get my revenge."

"I'll go you," said Jack, and they were soon hard at it.

Each won a game and then they thought it was time to relieve Larry.

"I'll fix up one of the beds and let him turn in on it," said Will.

"You better fix the other and turn in yourself," replied Jack. "It's after ten, and there isn't any use of both of us staying up. I'll call Larry at midnight."

"Why not call me?"

"Oh, you're the skipper and owner. You don't stand any watch."

"That doesn't make any difference in an emergency. I'm willing to do my share of duty."

"Well, maybe we'll call on you before morning."

Jack went outside.

"Same old fog, eh, Larry?"

"Yis. This is as bad as some of the fogs I've seen in the ould country."

"Then you've seen fogs in Ireland, have you?"

"Faith, I have. Many of them. They come in from the coast and settle down over the bogs till yez can't see nothin' at all, at all. I remimber it was in wan of thim fogs his riverence, Father O'Toole, lost his loife."

"Who was Father O'Toole?"

"The parish priest. Ye see, Barney McQuinlan sint for him, thinkin' he was at death's door, and his riverence, who had been expictin' such a call, in his hurry took a short cut across the bogs, and that was the last iver sane of him."

"What happened to him?"

"It was supposed that he fell in wan of the holes in the bog and couldn't get out ag'in. At any rate, that was the last of him, more's the pity, for he was a foine man, so he was."

"Well, go into the cabin and turn in for a spell. I'll call you at midnight."

"Sure, where will I turn in?"

"On one of the lockers."

"Won't I sp'ile thim pillows wid the flowers on thim?"

"You'll find other pillows for your head when you go in there."

So Larry entered the cabin. Will came out and talked with Jack till nearly eleven, and then went to bed. After that time hung drearily on Jack, for the fog remained as dense ase ver, and there wasn't the suspicion of a breeze. At midnight Jack roused Larry up and sent him outside.

"Mind you don't go to sleep," he said as the Irish lad yawned sleepily, for he wasn't used to having his night's rest broken in upon. "Bathe your face in the sea water and that will brighten you up."

Larry did so when he got outside, but before long the lonesomeness and silence overpowered him, and in spite of his efforts he fell asleep at his post. Jack had instructed him to call him at two o'clock, telling him he could find out the hour from Will's watch, which lay on the table; but when two came Larry was snoring away like a pig and Jack slept on. A light breeze sprang up and bellied the spread mainsail out a bit on the side it was swung out. The sheet, being made fast to a cleat, held it close hauled, which happened to be just right for the wind.

The yacht's head, by good luck, was pointed nearly up in the wind, and Larry's body unconsciously held the tiller in the right position, so the little craft sailed on at about a four-mile gait, not toward Long Island, but away from it, due southeast. As the moments passed the wind gathered more weight and pulled the boat faster through the water, heeling her a bit to port. The yacht had a strong weather-helm, and in the position Larry slumbered the tiller pressed against his chest. It didn't waken him, however, and the craft skimmed gayly along through the fast disappearing fog.

Hour after hour passed, and things remained about the same. The fog disappeared and the sky in the east began to lighten. The dawn of a new day was at hand, and still Larry Lambert slept on, notwithstanding the awkward posture of his body. As morning came on the wind fresh-

ened still more and the sea became more disturbed. The entire heaven was overcast with leaden clouds betokening the coming of rough weather. As the yacht began to pitch in the seas Larry awoke with a start. At first he was dazed and could not comprehend where he was. He imagined he was dreaming, and the dream was certainly not a pleasant one. At length he pulled himself together and realized his surroundings.

"Faith, it's aslape I've been, so I have, and that was ag'in orders," he muttered. "Be me sowl, things have changed a good bit since me last remembrance. Thin it was calm and the fog as thick as stirabout; now it seems the fog is gone, it's blowin' moighty fresh, and the boat is dancin' ahead loike a young colt. Sure, it must be after two o'clock. I belave it's near mornin', from the looks of things. Mother of Moses! if the tiller ain't stickin' into me chist loike it would bore a hole through me. It's afraid I am to let it go, the way the boat is caperin'. Thin how am I to go into the cabin to wake Jack? The boat might upset and drown us all. I must let things go as they are till Jack wakes up of his own accord and comes out to take charge himsilf."

It was fortunate that the wind held steady, for Larry wasn't much of a sailor, and could only steer the yacht under the most favorable conditions. Holding the tiller with his hand against his body he kept the yacht nearly on her right course, but it was accident, not skill, that enabled him to do so. Larry looked over the ruffled ocean, but not a sign of land could he see anywhere, nor was there a sail in sight.

"Howly St. Patrick! are we sailin' back to the harbor or away from it, I dunno? It's nothin' but salt water I can see on all sides. Maybe the compass will tell me."

He looked under the hood of the little brass binnacle in front of him, but at first could make neither head nor tail of the shivering card. At length he made out that the unsteady needle was pointing in a direction almost opposite to the course the yacht was follwing. Then he knew that the boat was going away from Long Island and not toward it.

"Be the hoof of Balaam's rabbit! it's south we're travelin', and that won't do at all, at all. I must call Jack up somehow."

With that he let out a hail toward the cabin door that might have wakened the dead had they been near a cemetery.

CHAPTER III.—In the Teeth of a Gale.

It awakened Jack from his slumbers, and he tumbled out of his bunk to feel the yacht bounding over the water like a thing of life. He also noticed that it was daylight.

"Why, how is this, Larry?" he cried, springing out into the cockpit. "The fog gone entirely, the wind piping at a lively rate and the sun almost up. Why didn't you call me before, and how long is it since the weather changed?"

"It's some time since the fog lifted, and I didn't call yez because I thought I'd try and steer mesilf," replied Larry, who was ashamed to admit that he had been asleep on his watch.

"Why, it's blowing too hard and the sea is too

rough for you to steer," said Jack, as he took Lambert's place at the tiller.

Then he glanced at the compass, expecting to find the boat headed about north.

"Great cobblestones!" he ejaculated. "We're sailing east by south. How long has she been on this course?"

"Ever since she started," hazarded Larry, taking the fact for granted since he hadn't altered the boat's course.

"Look out for your head. I'm going to come about," cried Jack.

Larry ducked as the boom came aboard and then swung off to starboard. At that moment the clouds parted for a moment close to the watery horizon in the east, and the upper disk of the rising sun came into view. A ruddy gleam shot athwart the surface of the ocean and brought into sight a full-rigged ship headed northwest. She made a fine picture with every sail set, and with her in the distance the seascape seemed less lonesome. Jack was sensible that the sky portended unfavorable weather, and it was not without anxiety that he began to wonder how far out on the Atlantic the yacht was. He told Larry to turn in, not suspecting that the Irish lad had slept longer than he had himself. Larry was in no hurry to avail himself of this privilege, for he was now wide awake and had no particular desire to sleep any more.

"Sure, I don't feel slapy a bit. When I turn in ag'in, I hope it will be in me own bed in the carriage loft," he said.

"Then you'd better go and get breakfast ready while you have the chance, for unless I'm much mistaken we're in for a lively return trip," said Jack.

Larry thought so, too, from the way the yacht was pitching on her new course, so he hastened to the forepeak to begin his culinary duties. The oil stove was stationary, of course, and was rigged with wire devices for holding the pots and pans in place above the burners when the boat pitched as she was doing at present. In spite of the above advantages, Larry soon found that cooking under existing conditions was a strenuous performance, and so he limited the bill-of-fare to fried eggs and coffee, with fried potatoes.

"Sure, some potted mate will do as well as anythin' else, and it's all ready to ate as soon as the cover comes off," he muttered.

As soon as everything was ready he began to set the table. The plates, knives and forks immediately began to move hither and thither as fast as he laid them down, and he was continually grabbing at them to prevent them from going over on the floor.

"Faith, it's a foine time we'll have atin' this mornin'," he grumbled, as he danced about the table.

The noise he made awoke Will.

"Hello, Larry, what are you doing?" he asked.

"Tryin' to set the table, sor."

"Set the table? Is it morning?"

"Yis, sor."

"Why, the yacht is moving. Are we in sight of shore?"

"No, sor. We're in sight of a ship, thot's all."

"How long has the yacht been under way?"

"Some hours, sor."

"Some hours, and land not in sight yet. My

gracious! We must have drifted a good distance south."

"Yis, sor. I'm thinkin' so mesilf. Yez had better get up, for breakfast is all ready and waitin'. I must go and look at the things on the stove, but I'm afeard to lave the table."

"Why so?" asked Will, jumping up and reaching for his trousers.

"Sure, everythin' is liable to dance on to the flure the boat is thot unsteady."

Will laughed and hurried on his clothes. After making a hasty toilet and calling out "Good-morning, Jack," to the steersman, he stood guard in Larry's place over the tableware. The Irish boy dished up a part of the breakfast for Will, and the young owner made a hasty meal. Then he went out into the cockpit.

"Things look kind of squally, don't they, Jack?" he said.

"They do that. I'm afraid we'll run into a gale before we can fetch the harbor," replied Jack.

"Well, go and get your breakfast. I'll take your place."

Will was quite capable of handling the yacht as matters stood, so Jack resigned the helm to him and entered the cabin. He found Larry holding his cup of coffee in one hand while he used his knife with the other.

"Will yez help yoursilf, Jack? I've got me hands full at prisent," said Larry.

"Sure I will," replied Harding, and he proceeded to get his breakfast as best he could.

"I'll lave the dishes stand till we get into port," said the Irish boy, when both had finished; "and glad enough I'll be whin we get into smooth water ag'in."

Both boys went into the cockpit.

"It's getting rougher every minute, Jack," said Will. "That ship yonder is taking a reef in some of her sails, and so I think it is advisable to take a couple of reefs in our mainsail."

"I was about to suggest that," replied Jack. "Come, Larry, get busy."

The upper boom was lowered enough to enable them to put a reef in the bottom of the sail, and then the job was repeated, thus reducing the spread of canvas by a third. The wind increased so fast that it was considered necessary to put a third reef in the sail, and under that the "Sun-beam" tore along as fast as a racehorse. The distant ship reduced sail considerably, taking in some of her canvas altogether, which showed that her skipper anticipated dirty weather. An hour later the wind was blowing a gale and the sky was more threatening than ever. The seas were running so high that Jack deemed it best to lay to. The ship which they had kept in sight so long had disappeared in the misty atmosphere. The yacht had come back to within fifteen miles of Long Island, though she was several miles to the eastward of it.

The gale had chopped around a couple of points and blew against them. The result was the yacht was carried back over the course she had followed. Matters grew worse instead of better as time passed. The boys were compelled to come around and run before the wind, which took them further and further from their native land. The little craft skimmed over the seas like a frightened seagull. The water dashed on board in

bucketfuls and the cockpit was continually awash. Jack sat at the tiller clad in an oilskin coat and steered, while the wind and spray flogged his back. Larry was kept busy bailing the cockpit out. Will remained in the cabin until it was time for him to relieve Jack. When noon came around the boys had to be satisfied with a cold bite, as Larry couldn't undertake to do any cooking on account of the continuous plunging of the yacht. The gale became almost a hurricane during the afternoon, and the yacht would certainly have been swamped but for its air-tanks, which kept it as buoyant as a lifeboat.

"Howly Moses! Will we ever get out of this, I dunno?" said Larry, who was exhausted by his efforts to keep the water from flooding the cabin.

"Oh, we'll ride it out somehow," responded Jack. "This boat can't sink."

"It's a wonderful boat, so it is; but me heart is in me mouth just the same. Luk at thim waves follerin' us. I'm expectin' ivery moment they'll swamp us, yet they niver same to reach us. Jist as they are about to break over us, troth! up goes the boat and chates 'em. It's me eyes thot are so full of spray thot I'm afeard I'll niver be able to see wid any satisfaction ag'in."

It was small wonder that Larry was appalled by the situation. Jack and Will were uneasy as well, though they put on a bold front. Jack had seen some rough weather, Will very little; neither, however, anything that could hold a candle to the present storm. Though the boat was practically unsinkable, it was still liable to be smashed by the waves. Had one good sea hit the yacht fairly it would have been all over with them. Her lightness carried her out of reach of them, like a cork, for the action of the waves is always rhythmical. As long as she was kept headed into the wind she was comparatively safe. So the afternoon, dull and menacing, passed away, and black darkness, that seemed like a dense funeral pall, enveloped everything. The horrors of that long night the boys never forgot.

They scarcely touched a bit of food, so anxious were they. When daylight came on they were ready to drop from fatigue, but there was no let up for them, though the gale seemed to be breaking. How far south they now were they had not the faintest idea, but they reckoned over 100 miles. As a matter of fact, they had been driven over 200 miles southeast from the Long Island shores, and into the midst of the broad Atlantic. The wind sensibly diminished by ten o'clock, but the sky remained overcast and the waves ran higher than before, for the weight of the wind had hitherto kept them down some. They did not dare think of altering the yacht's course under present conditions, and so another 100 miles was added to the distance that separated them from home, and another night came on, almost as bad as the preceding one.

CHAPTER IV.—The Strange Derelict.

"I'll bet you won't forget this adventure soon, Will," said Jack, as the two sat together at the tiller, with the roar of the wind and sea in their ears.

"Not if we're lucky enough to reach shore once

more," replied Will. "We must be a long distance out on the Atlantic."

"You can gamble on it that we are."

"It will probably take us a week to sail back after this storm blows out. My folks are no doubt worried to death about me."

"Yes, and my mother and sisters are in the same boat. Larry is the only one who doesn't have a care whether school keeps or not."

"I'll bet he's had a year's growth frightened out of him."

"Where is he now? Asleep?"

"Yes. He was plumb fagged out. It's a good thing the water doesn't come in like it did. Gives us a breathing spell. Don't you think the storm is going down?"

"I guess it is. I wouldn't be surprised if the sun rose in a clear sky tomorrow morning."

"Gee! I hope so. I've had enough of this to last me all my life."

It blew hard all night, and the morning, contrary to Jack's hopes, dawned cloudy and boisterous. The wind had veered around a bit and carried them more to the east. Larry managed to make some coffee, and it tasted mighty good to the three boys. It blew too heavy that day for them to take any chances of wearing around and starting once more for home. During the night the gale blew itself out, and Jack, when he went to the tiller at four o'clock, relieving Larry, told the latter to help him shake a couple of the reefs out of the mainsail. This done, he put the yacht about and headed northwest. Soon after sunrise Will came out of the cabin and looked around with great satisfaction, for the wind had fined down to a light breeze, and the sun was rising in a nearly cloudless sky.

"We're headed for home," said Jack.

"Glad to hear it. Hello! What is that yonder?"

He pointed at a dark object lying dead ahead. "It's a craft of some kind. I'm heading for her," replied Jack. "Seems to be something of a wreck. All her masts save a part of the mainmast appear to have gone by the board, for there's no sign of them."

"There may be a number of people aboard who might want to be taken off. We haven't room to carry many on this yacht."

"We can carry quite a number in a pinch. A ship's longboat will do that, and this craft is a great deal more comfortable even overloaded than an open boat."

The two boys talked and watched the distant craft, which looked more and more curious the nearer they came to her. A single mast, which seemed stouter than an ordinary one by a good deal, rose in the centre of the craft to a height of perhaps forty feet. It seemed to be heavily braced in a way different from what masts usually are. Her bowsprit was short and stout, and her bulwarks high. She was painted a bright red, and her hull seemed to be made of iron.

"She's a funny looking craft," remarked Will.

"She is that. Though apparently dismayed, I see no signs of wreckage about her. That centre mast gets me. It isn't like the lower part of an ordinary one."

Will brought out a small telescope and took a sight at the vessel through it.

"She doesn't look like a wreck at all, though a

part of her bulwarks is stove in," he said. "And that thing we have taken for a mast isn't a mast at all."

"What is it?" asked Jack.

"Blessed if I can tell what it is. When I say it isn't a mast I mean it isn't like a regular mast. Looks like a derrick without the swinging crane. It is braced from the top by four stiff ropes or chains, spread out, two to starboard and two to port. I don't see anyone aboard. Take a peep."

Jack focussed the glass on the floating derelict. She was certainly an odd craft, very broad for her length, and seemed to have been built for some special purpose. Whatever that purpose was it was certainly not to sail the seas. As far as he could make out there wasn't a sign of life about her. In the course of an hour they were close aboard of her. Larry came out into the cockpit and his mouth opened and his eyes stared when he caught sight of the derelict.

"Be gorry, it's a shame," he said, evidently taking the derrick-like mast at first sight for a funnel.

"No, Larry, it isn't a steamer by a long shot," replied Jack.

"Sure, what is it, thin? Will yez give it a name?"

"We don't know what it is, for it doesn't seem to be exactly a wreck. Will and I are going to learn what she is, if we have to go aboard to find out."

Larry looked earnestly at the vessel for a few minutes, then he said:

"If there was only a round ball on the top of that mast, sure it would look loike a loightship I've seen off Sligo Bay."

"Lightships have two masts, and sometimes three, I think," said Jack.

"Sure, I've seen three loightships on the other side and they only had wan mast each," replied Larry.

"What would a lightship be doing out here in the middle of the Atlantic?" asked Will.

"She wouldn't be here unless she had broken away from her moorings, and that is a very rare occurrence," replied Jack. "They are held to their anchorage by thick steel chains that one wouldn't imagine could ever break."

"If it is a lightship that had got away somehow, her crew ought to be aboard, and I should think they would be on the lookout for a rescue," said Will. "We're quite close to her now, and it's very funny nobody seems to be looking at us. It is my opinion she has been abandoned."

"That's my idea, too," replied Jack.

"Her boats are gone," said Will presently. "See the falls hanging loose down near the water."

"That settles it, I guess. What do you say about running alongside, making fast and boarding her?" said Jack.

"What do you say?"

"You're the skipper of this boat, and it's up to you. I'd like to do it if you have no objection."

"Do it, then," said Will, who was just as eager as Jack to investigate the strange derelict.

Accordingly, Jack steered the yacht close to one of the falls and hitched on.

"I'll shin up first and you can follow," he said.

"All right," replied Will, who, after all, was not over anxious to be the first to step on board the vessel.

There was no saying what sight the deck might

reveal; or if not the deck, the cabin, or some other part of her. Up went Jack, like a monkey on a stick, and his two companions watched his ascent. The vessel was sheathed with iron and presented a battered appearance. One or two links of a ponderous iron chain hung out through an iron plated hawse-hole at the bows. It had clearly snapped off at that point. If this was a lightship, it was an old-fashioned one. Jack soon reached the iron davit, scrambled up on it and looked down on the vessel's deck. There was little of it that wasn't occupied by the long cabin-like structure aft, another house amidships through the roof of which came up the mast, but with a wide opening around it, and two other buildings forward, one of which Jack judged to be the galley, as the roof was pierced by a brass funnel or stove-pipe. There was a wide promenade around and between all the buildings forward of the cabin section. The cabin roof was ornamented by two brass skylights of good size, and another brass funnel between them.

"Well, if this isn't an odd-looking ship, I'm a Dutchman," muttered Jack, as he surveyed the deck before him. "I've seen many kinds of vessels, but never one like this before. I should imagine it was a harbor craft of some kind, for it is not provided with steam power or sails, and seems only intended to be towed from place to place. It must have got adrift from the last anchorage and floated out to sea."

"Well, what do you see, Jack?" asked Will.

"Shin up and take a look yourself," replied Harding.

"No dead people about, are there?" said Will, who had a deep-rooted aversion to corpses.

"No, nor live ones, either."

"Why don't you shout and see if there's anybody aboard?"

"Hilloa! Ship ahoy!" shouted Jack, as Will began clambering up the falls.

Nothing came of the hail. Jack repeated it several times without any result.

"The vessel is surely abandoned," he said, as he reached down to give Will a hand.

The young owner of the "Sunbeam" was as much astonished as Jack when he caught a view of the deck of the derelict.

"I never saw a house around a mast before," he said.

"Nor I," replied Jack. "Nor a deck so covered with houses. That is no doubt the cabin aft, and a big one it is. The small house with the stove-pipe seems to be the galley. The other house forward the quarters of the crew."

"And nobody aboard?"

"It doesn't seem as if there was. I've yelled loud enough to draw attention."

"Go ahead, let's explore the ship."

"All right," replied Jack, and he slid down the davit to the bulwark, and then sprang upon the deck.

Will followed.

"We'll take in the centre house first," he said.

It was a circular wooden structure, something over six feet in diameter, with a door and small windows. Right through the center of this house rose the thick unyielding mast of the vessel. Pushing the door open the boys looked in.

"By George! This is a lightship!" exclaimed Jack. "There's the big lantern."

The lantern, a beautiful piece of costly mechan-

ism, surrounded the mast and traveled upon it. The boys were certainly surprised by the discovery of the real identity of the strange craft.

"A lightship bobbing about in the middle of the Atlantic is something out of the usual," said Will. "Beyond any doubt, it has broken away from its moorings, and is probably being hunted for at this moment. The question is, where did it come from?"

"And where are the crew and keeper?" chipped in Jack.

"They must have taken to their boats, thinking the vessel was about to founder. That's my idea."

"I guess you're right. Let's take a look at the cabin."

"Wait a minute. I'm getting hungry. I'll tell Larry to start up breakfast. By the time we've been over this craft, the meal ought to be ready."

Will went to the bulwark and found the Irish boy gazing up at the point where they boarded.

"Larry," he said.

"Yis, sor."

"Get breakfast ready. We'll be back inside of half an hour."

"All right, sor."

Will and Jack then entered the cabin.

CHAPTER V.—The Missing Treasure Ship.

It is unnecessary to describe in detail what the boys saw in the cabin, or in the other parts of the vessel they explored. Suffice to say they found nobody, either alive or dead, but plenty of evidences of hasty departure on the part of the late occupants of the lightship. Duds were scattered about, lockers overhauled, and confusion everywhere.

"They were evidently in a hurry," said Jack.

"I should remark," replied Will. "This would be a case of salvage for us, and put good money into our pockets, if we were able to tow her into some port. It is a pity we can't. Somebody else is bound to pick her up in the course of time if she doesn't go down in the next gale she encounters."

"Not much chance of our little craft towing a big unwieldy craft like this, even an inch. She'd simply drag us her way."

"That's right. We must let her slide. Well, let's go to breakfast. It ought to be ready by this time."

When they reached the bulwark they found that the wind had died out completely. The ocean now rose and fell in great undulations, probably the after effect of the late gale, but there were no waves. The sun cast a dazzling pathway across the water, too glaring for the eyes to dwell upon.

"We've got the other extreme, a dead calm, to wrestle with now," said Will. "We are not likely to make any progress homeward while it lasts."

They descended to the yacht and found breakfast ready. After the meal, while Larry was washing the pans and dishes, Will and Jack sat in the cockpit and talked the situation over.

"We might as well hang on to the lightship while the calm lasts, for it isn't likely if we cut

loose that we'd drift far away from her," said Jack.

Will nodded.

"Suppose we go aboard again and take another look at things," he said. "I'd like to examine the lamp and its mechanism."

"I'm with you," replied Jack.

So they made their way aboard, entered the lantern-house, and spent an hour there, looking the big lamp and its prisms over, and making themselves familiar with the method by which it was raised and lowered. Wandering forward they saw the windlass, around which twined two enormous chain cables. Only one of the cables had been in use to hold the vessel to her anchor. It had been subjected to some tremendous strain, for it had parted, as we mentioned before, at the hawse-hole. The two boys loafed about the ship till after twelve o'clock when they returned to the yacht where they found Larry making preparations for dinner.

After the mid-day meal Larry wanted to go aboard the lightship, but nothing would induce him to go alone, so Jack accompanied him while Will remained on the boat. The calm held all day, and all night, too, and when the boys turned out on the following morning not a breath of air was stirring. They found the situation decidedly monotonous, but there was no help for it. The ocean gradually quieted down till its surface became as smooth almost as a millpond. Although they did not realize that they had moved any distance at all from the moment the calm fell, still for all that, derelict and yacht had been steadily drifting eastward. Not a sail nor the smoke of a distant steamer broke the monotony of the seascape.

They were alone in mid-ocean, like a "painted ship upon a painted ocean." Thus five days passed away, five days of complete stagnation, and the three boys were heartily sick of the inaction forced upon them. Still, it was not so bad as the two days of storm through which they had passed without meeting with disaster. Late on the afternoon of the fifth day the atmosphere and sky began to assume a peculiar look. Clearly a change of some kind was to be expected, but none of the lads were experienced enough to understand what it meant. At length Jack thought of the barometer he had seen hanging in the cabin of the lightship, and he went and looked at it. He saw that the silver had fallen in it, and was steadily going down. That meant another tempest was brewing and he communicated the news to Will.

"Why, I don't see any sign of a storm," said Will.

"The worst storms are those that come unexpectedly upon one at sea," replied Jack. "The barometer never lies even if all other indications point to the contrary. You can take my word for it that we'll be in another blow shortly, and it's more than liable to put this old hooker out of business for good. We must cut loose from her and trust to luck."

"I'm willing to take your word for it," answered Will, "for you're more experienced than I am; but without wind I don't see how we're going to shake her."

"As soon as we unship our painter we'll drift away by degrees."

"Before we sever our connection with her, there are a few things aboard we ought to take with us," said Will, mentioning a number of items.

"All right. We'll collect them and send them down to Larry to stow away."

They spent nearly an hour removing sundry articles, including the barometer, to the yacht. Among other things was a bound volume of an old English weekly paper. When they were ready to cast off there were still no signs of any coming disturbance in either sea or air. Jack pushed the yacht along the side of the lightship till he reached her stern, and then shoved the boat away from her. She floated a few yards off and then came to a perfect rest. To be prepared for an emergency Jack and Larry hoisted the mainsail and then in succession took three reefs in it, greatly reducing its spread. Larry then started to get supper ready while Jack and Will began to look over the pages of the English newspaper.

They soon became interested in an account of a "Missing Treasure Ship." This vessel, called the "Windsor Castle," had left Bombay on a certain date, bound for London, via Cape Town, for there was no Suez Canal at that time. She belonged to the East India Company, and carried, besides her officers and crew, a number of military officers, some accompanied with their wives, on a year's furlough. The "Windsor Castle" carried an assorted cargo, and two million dollars in money, the major part of which was in silver, and all of it was stored in sacks in the hold. Each sack was sealed with the official seal of the East Indian Company.

The vessel arrived at Cape Town without mishap and remained there several days. Subsequently she was spoken off the coast of Africa by the bark "Golden Hope." She was never reported again. None of her passengers or crew was ever heard of. She disappeared as completely as though she had vanished into thin air, and with her went nearly \$2,000,000. Several attempts were made to find her wreck, for it was supposed she had gone ashore somewhere along the coast of Africa, but the efforts were fruitless. The natural conclusion then prevailed that she had been sunk at sea.

A few years afterward several natives appeared in the town of Coomassie with an unusual supply of silver money in their possession, which they spent in a royal way. The suspicions of the authorities were aroused and they were arrested. Neither threats nor persuasions could make them tell how they had come into possession of so much coin. A rigid investigation failed to connect them with any crime, so they were released. They were watched and after a time were seen to put to sea in a small coasting craft. A sudden gale capsized their boat and their bodies floated ashore.

The money they had spent so freely in Coomassie was India coinage, all silver, and similar to that shipped by the East India Company in the lost "Windsor Castle." That fact led many persons to suppose that the natives had found the wreck, discovered the presence of the money in her hold, and carried away a quantity with the intention of returning later for more of it. This idea of course led to fresh expeditions in search of the lost treasure ship, but nothing came of them, and up to the date of the publication of the

story the whereabouts of the wreck, with its \$2,000,000 in gold and silver coin, remained a profound mystery.

CHAPTER VI.—Struck by a Hurricane.

"What do you think of that story?" said Will.

"I think it is quite interesting."

"Stories of lost treasure ships usually are, and this has the merit of truth. I guess there is very little danger that those \$2,000,000 will ever come to light. The 'Windsor Castle' no doubt sank in deep water."

"If she did, how then do you account for the natives having in their possession some of the same silver money lost with the ship?"

"The article doesn't state that it was the same, but similar."

"They must have come by it easily since they made no bones about squandering it so recklessly in the town of Coomassie that the authorities pulled them in on general suspicion."

"They might have plundered somebody or some house a hundred miles away."

"They might, but did they?"

"Ask me something easier, Jack," laughed Will.

"If the Coomassie authorities couldn't find out whether they did, how can I tell?"

"Well, what do you think about it? The fact that they refused to explain how they came by the money, and the circumstance that later on, when they had spent all their funds, they started off in a boat for some unknown destination, looks significant to me."

"That's true, but still it doesn't really prove that they had discovered the wreck of the treasure ship. It strikes me that if the wreck was anywhere along the African coast within a radius of the spot where the 'Windsor Castle' was last spoken, one of the expeditions sent out to find it would have got some clue at least to the vessel's fate."

"I don't know much about the west coast of Africa, but it is not improbable that the ship was driven up some narrow river or other body of water, and maybe lost among the tropical vegetation some distance from the shore."

"Yes, such a thing isn't unlikely; but wouldn't an expedition, with such a rich prize in sight, look into every river and creek they came to as well as along the coast itself? Remember the story says that several expeditions went at different times in search of the treasure ship and all returned unsuccessful."

"I suppose there is no use of our wasting time arguing about the matter, seeing that there is nothing in it for us. We're not bound on any such wild-goose treasure hunt, though if we had a clue to the resting place of the 'Windsor Castle,' I'd be only too eager to search for her to get a share of the lost \$2,000,000."

"There can't be much left of her now, anyway, for she was lost all of fifty years ago," said Will.

"The better class of English ships in those days were built of the best live oak, which is calculated to resist the action of the elements for a good many years. I'll warrant if the 'Windsor Castle' is ashore in some secluded place, there is still enough of her left to hold the money together."

Larry now called the two boys to supper, and the three sat down to the meal together. It was nearly dark when Jack and Will returned to the cockpit. The "Sunbeam" and the derelict light-ship had floated about a quarter of a mile apart. A heavy haze lay along the distant horizon, and the sky looked unreal and lurid."

"I don't like the look of things," said Jack. "I'm afraid we're in for a tough spell of weather. We're really only amateur sailors at the best, and a whole lot will depend on this boat. If I didn't know it was thoroughly stanch and next door to a life-boat, I'd begin to think that our chances of ever seeing the shore again were kind of slight."

"If you begin to croak, Jack, I'll have a fit," said Will soberly. "I don't want to die yet a while. I have too much to live for."

"Oh, I guess we'll pull through," replied Jack cheerfully. "We ran through as tough a gale as one usually meets with at sea, and I don't see that the yacht shows any bad effects from it. The man who built this boat evidently didn't skimp his work."

"I should hope not. Father paid a top-notch price for her, and the contract called for every precaution, for my folks don't want to lose me if they can help it."

By this time it was dark and the derelict was not to be seen. The boys continued to talk, but Jack kept a watchful eye on the heavens in the direction whence he looked for the storm to come. The sky was resplendent with stars except for some degrees above the horizon in that direction. As the evening advanced the stars in the northwest grew dim and were blotted out altogether. At midnight while Larry was on watch, not a star could be seen anywhere. The yacht seemed to be hanging in the centre of a black void, for the young Irishman could not even see the water which lay within a yard of him. A deep hush hung over the face of nature, and this, with the blackness of the night, terrified Larry, arousing all his superstitious fancies. Had he been alone on that boat he would probably have jumped overboard in a paroxysm of terror. As it was, he couldn't stand the lonesomeness and weirdness of his surroundings and, going into the cabin, awakened Jack. Harding sprang up at his first touch.

"What's the matter?" he asked. Then catching the appalled look in the boy's face, and seeing that he was trembling visibly, he said: "What in creation ails you?"

"Howly St. Patrick! We're gone entirely. The saints preserve us! Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! I'm a great sinner, so I am."

With those words he collapsed utterly, and lay groaning on the floor. Jack dashed to the door and looked out. He thought the storm was almost on them. There was no sign of it to his comparatively inexperienced eyes. Then he grabbed Larry by the shoulders and shook him.

"What in thunder are you frightened at?" he ejaculated.

It was some little time before Larry could explain the horrible sensations that the silence and darkness had given him. When he did, Jack laughed at him.

"Sure, I can't stand it at all, at all. Come out wid me and talk to me and maybe I'll be able to hold out."

"Never mind. Turn in on my bunk. I'll call

you as soon as I need your assistance," and Jack went outside and took up the watch.

After a short spell of it himself he had to admit that it wasn't pleasant. At length he heard a low humming sound in the distance.

"The storm is coming," he muttered, springing up. "A close-reefed jib will be enough sail to show, I guess. I can keep her head up in the wind with that."

He entered the cabin and shook Larry into wakefulness.

"Light the lantern and follow me outside," he said, getting into his long oilskin coat.

He and Larry went forward and set the jib in the way Jack wanted it. Then they spread a piece of sailcloth over the skylight and nailed it down. After that they secured the mainsail snugly to the boom and attached extra fastenings to the booms to make sure they wouldn't break away and swing out.

"Now get into the cabin and close the door. Get your oilskin on, for I may call upon you for help at any moment."

By that time the distant hum had increased to a sullen roar, and yet all was calm and silent around the yacht. But not for long. Inside of five minutes the hurricane struck them with a force that shot the boat seemingly into the air, like an arrow from the bow. After that Jack felt as if he was in a chaos of uproar and action.

CHAPTER VII.—Ashore in the Barbadoes.

When the dull gray light of morning dawned the "Sunbeam" was over a hundred miles further to the east and south, but the hurricane had blown itself out. Jack had stuck nobly to his post, and looked like a wreck when he shouted to Will to relieve him. The yacht had behaved as nobly as the brave young steersman, and to that fact all aboard owed their preservation. The weather began to clear about eight o'clock, and then Larry managed to make a pot of coffee, and it braced the boys up, particularly Jack, who had stood the brunt of the tempest. A consultation was then held.

"I think it would be foolish to try and retrace our course now," said Jack. "We are probably a thousand miles from Long Island out in the Atlantic. We are lost as much as a needle would be in a haystack. We could only sail in a general way toward the north and west, and where we would ultimately fetch up no one could say."

"What would you suggest then?" asked Will.

"That we try and make one of the big West Indian islands before we run out of provisions. We ought to be able to do that with fair weather which I think is likely to hold for a while now. As soon as we reach a regular port you will be able to cable to your father, and then arrangements can be made about getting the yacht and ourselves back to the United States," said Jack.

This plan Will agreed to and the "Sunbeam" was put on a course that would carry her right among the islands of the tropics.

Four days passed and then Jack began to look for land.

But a week went by and none appeared, though the weather indications showed that they were well in the tropics.

They were right in the midst of the West Indian islands, and yet their course took them just out of sight of every island of any prominence.

They might just as well have been a thousand miles from land.

They actually skirted the whole length of the Leeward Island on the east, a matter of over 400 miles, and then ran half way down the Windward group before they first saw land.

By that time they had been three weeks at sea.

The afternoon was well advanced when they came in sight of the Barbadoes, a large island about thirteen degrees above the equator, longitude 59, and some minutes west.

They fairly shouted for joy when the blue cloud resolved itself into land on the starboard bow.

"An island at last," cried Will. "I thought we were fated to keep straight on to the South Pole."

They hadn't the remotest idea what the island was; but just then they didn't care.

Any old island where they would find civilization was good enough for them.

They were heartily sick of the sea, and longed for the moment when they would be able to stretch their legs ashore.

They did not dream that they were on the very outskirts of the West Indies, and that had they passed this island in the dark, as they had many others, they would have sailed straight on into the trackless south Atlantic.

When they got within three miles of the island they found their way blocked by a coral reef, and Jack went forward to look for an opening.

No matter from what point they might have approached the island they would probably have met with these reefs, for it is almost encircled by them.

They soon found a clear channel, however, and sailed through it without mishap.

As they drew near the shore they saw a long beach ahead with an indentation, forming a small exposed haven.

At the head of this little harbor stood a small village.

There are only four towns of any size on the island, which has an area of 170 square miles, but the nearest was miles away.

The sun was setting when they ran alongside of, and made fast to, a small wharf, occupied by a score or two of negroes, or native Barbadoans, who viewed their appearance with a great deal of curiosity.

Seated apart on a string-piece was the only white man in sight, and he was a particularly hard looking chap, evidently a sailor.

He was smoking a short briar-root pipe, and he had had his eye on the yacht from the moment it passed through the passage in the reef.

Jack and Will sprang on the wharf, leaving Larry in charge of the boat.

Looking around them in an uncertain way they decided to accost the white man.

"How do you do, sir," said Jack, stepping up to him.

"How are ye, my hearty," replied the sailor, cocking a wicked eye on the two boys. "Ye've got a smart lookin' craft there. Where d'ye hail from?"

"We've come from Long Island, New York," answered Jack.

"Long Island, New York, eh? That's quite a

ways from here. Did ye come all the way in that there cockleshell?"

"Yes, we came all the way in that yacht."

"Nor direct, o' course."

"This is the first island we've met on our way."

"The fust island!" grinned the sailor, unbelievably. "D'ye mean to tell me ye're sailed clean through the West Indies and didn't stop at no place till ye got here?"

"Clean through the West Indies!" ejaculated Jack, in astonishment. "What do you mean? What island is this?"

"The Barbadoes, my hearty, as I reckon ye ought to know, seein' ye've put in here."

"Is this really the Barbadoes?" asked Jack, much astonished.

"I reckon it ain't nothin' else," replied the sailor, putting his pipe in his pocket and biting off a huge quid of plug tobacco. "Didn't know that?"

"No, we didn't. How far off is the nearest town?"

"Ye'll find St. Andrew a matter of a few miles down the coast."

"But we want water and some fresh provisions right away."

"D'ye see that smoke yonder? He understands English Go and talk to him."

The boys accordingly walked up to a dark skinned native and made their request, stating that they were willing to pay in good American money.

At first the negro declared that their money was no good, but finally he said:

"S'pose you pay double price maybe me see what me kin do for young gentlemen."

Will agreed to pay double price for anything in the eating line.

Indeed, he was ready to pay any price at all for fresh provisions and water.

By the time they had reached an agreement darkness came upon them with the customary suddenness of the tropics.

The native told them to follow him, and led them to the main store of the village, which looked and smelt very like a ship chandlery establishment.

Their conductor, who was evidently the proprietor, told them to take seats on a broad veranda.

He then called a couple of negroes, gave them directions and sent them away.

In the course of twenty minutes they returned with a bountiful supply of fresh fruit and divers other things in the edible line.

Two other natives brought big cans of water.

A third native loaded with a lot of canned American goods, and then the boys' conductor said the price was five dollars in American money.

Will passed a bill of that denomination over and the whole party took up their line of march for the wharf where the yacht lay.

to go away, so Jack and Will continued their conversation with him.

They learned that his name was Jim Bludso, and that he had been on the island about a month.

Jack told him how they had got lost in a fog off Long Island three weeks before, and had drifted out of sight of the land.

How when they started to sail back after the fog lifted on the following morning a big gale caught and blew the yacht a long distance into the Atlantic.

He described how they had fallen in with the abandoned lightship and the calm that followed.

Then he told about the hurricane that had carried them still further into the broad Atlantic, and how they had determined to make for one of the islands in the West Indies, as the most likely way of getting out of their scrape.

The sailor listened to their adventures with no little interest and surprise.

"This here boat must be a corker," he ejaculated. "Ye are only half-fledged sailors, and yet ye have weathered a tremenjous gale and a hurricane that has often sent many a big ship to the bottom. I don't see how ye got through, blame me if I do."

Will explained how the yacht was built with four airtight compartments that would prevent her from sinking even if she capsized or was flooded with water.

The sailor opened his eyes at that.

"No. Not unless her side was stove in by the sea."

"She must be a sort of new-fangled concern."

"Oh, no. Pleasure boats have been built like her for a long time back."

"I ain't heard about 'em," and he looked reflectively at the water, as if he was thinking about something.

Here Larry called the boys to supper and Will invited the sailor to eat with them. He accepted, and enlivened the meal with yarns of his long and varied experiences on the briny deep. After supper the two boys and the sailor went back to the cockpit, while Larry busied himself washing the dishes. Bludso got out his pipe and began to smoke in silence, while the boys watched the lights on the shore, and listened to the odd songs of the natives that floated to them on the still night air.

"It feels awful strange to find ourselves way down here at the Barbadoes," remarked Will at length.

"It does, for a fact," replied Jack.

"When we started out on our little pleasure cruise that morning we never dreamed where we would fetch up at."

"That's right. Nobody knows when he leaves the house in the morning whether he'll walk home or be brought home at night."

"I'll have a dandy story to tell when I get back," said Will.

"So will I. The village lads will all take their hats off to me."

"When we reach St. Andrew to-morrow I guess I'll be able to cable home to the folks. We can also write a long letter each giving an outline of what we've been through. My governor will send me funds and will probably come down here after us."

"Then I guess we may consider the worst as over, and all we need do till you hear from your

CHAPTER VIII.—Off for the Gold Coast.

When they reached the "Sunbeam" they found the strange sailor seated in the cockpit talking with Larry.

The provisions and water were put on board, and then the Irish lad was told to get supper.

The hard looking visitor showed no disposition

father is to see the sights on the island and enjoy ourselves."

"Look here, my hearties," interrupted the sailor. "What d'ye say to goin' to the coast of Africa in this boat?"

"Going to the coast of Africa!" gasped both boys.

The mariner nodded.

"Why, that's clear across the Atlantic," said Will. "Why should we go on such a trip as that? I guess we've had about all the salt water we want for a spell. We have a long trip before us to get home, though I doubt much if we'll go in the yacht."

"Wouldn't ye be in favor of goin' to the Gold Coast if ye knew ye could make your fortin by doin' so?" asked Bludso, with a mysterious wink.

"Make our fortune! How could we do that?" said Jack.

"As easy as rollin' off a log, my hearties. We could divide the treasure into two parts—one for you chaps and the other for me, d'ye see? It's more'n a million."

"What treasure?" asked Will, pricking up his ears.

The sailor winked solemnly, refilled and lighted his pipe before he replied.

"A treasure of gold and silver coin."

"Where is this treasure, and what do you know about it?" asked Jack, eagerly.

The mariner gave another solemn wink.

"Don't ye ask too many questions all at once. I'm the only man livin' that knows where it is."

"Is this one of your sailor yarns?" asked Will, incredulously.

"Nary yarn, my hearty. It's the solemn truth."

"What evidence have you to show that there is a treasure in gold and silver on the Gold Coast?"

"The evidence of my eyes. I seen it."

"You did! You saw more than a million dollars in gold and silver coin?"

The sailor nodded.

"That means then that you were right on the spot where it is?" said Jack.

Bludso nodded again.

"Then why didn't you carry it away with you?"

"I couldn't."

"Why couldn't you?"

"I was lucky to get away myself. I had no boat, no provisions, nothin'. How could I carry big bags of silver and gold coin on my back?"

"But you did get away from the place."

"O' course, or I wouldn't be here."

"Why didn't you get a boat of some kind, and another man or two to help you, and go back and get it?"

"I did."

"Well? Why didn't you get it, then?"

"I'll tell ye. When I got to Coomassie—"

"Coomassie!" cried Will, a light breaking in on him, speaking in a tone of some excitement. "Was it the treasure of the 'Windsor Castle' you found?"

Jim Bludso took the pipe from his mouth and stared at the boy.

"What d'ye know about the treasure of the 'Windsor Castle'?"

"We know a whole lot, don't we, Jack?"

"Bet your life we do. We know that she had \$2,000,000 in gold and silver done up in bags

with the seal of the East India Company on them."

"How did ye find all that out?" said the mariner, with an unpleasant look.

"We're not telling everything we know," replied Will.

"Well, ye don't know where the wreck lies."

"No, we don't. If we did, we'd go there and get the money."

"Well, ain't that what I want ye to do?"

"Can you take us to the place?"

"I kin."

Will and Jack looked at each other, and their eyes blazed with interest.

"You are sure of that, are you?" said Will.

"Sartin as I live."

"Well, you were going to tell us why you didn't get the money after you reached Coomassie with the secret."

"It was this way: When I got to the town I looked around and found a couple of chaps I thought I could trust, so I made the proposition to them. One of them owned a good sized sloop. They jumped at it, d'ye see, as I reckon you chaps ought to do. In about a week we set sail for the place the wreck is; but just afore we reached it I overheard the two chaps conspirin' ag'in me. A third of the money each didn't seem to satisfy 'em, they wanted my share, too. They arranged that as soon as I p'inted out the wreck to 'em I was to be done up. Then they intended to load the sloop with the treasure, sail away with it, and arterwards whack up."

"Well?" said Jack, in an interested tone.

"It was a scurvy trick, don't ye think?" said the sailor, eveing the boys.

"I should say so," replied Jack.

"I didn't do nothin'," answered the sailor.

"You didn't?" said Jack, in surprise.

"No. I jest piloted 'em to the wrong spot, and then made out that I'd lost the bearin's of the place. We searched around for a week without findin' the ship and then we give it up," he grinned.

"You were pretty sharp," said Will.

"Why didn't you get a sloop and sail down there yourself alone?" said Jack.

"Didn't have no money to hire one. I shipped on a brig to this here island, intendin' to go back and get the money some day. Now I see my chance if you chaps 'll go in with me. You provide the boat to git there and take the money off, and we'll whack up even. A half to you and a half to me. That's fair, seein' ye couldn't git the money without me, and I couldn't git it without ye and the boat. What d'ye say? I reckon it's the chance of yer life."

"I don't know," replied Will. "In the first place it's a dangerous trip across the South Atlantic."

"Not a bit more dangerous than ye've been through already and come out as safe as a trivet. Ye might go across without meetin' any storm to speak of. At any rate, two million dollars in hard coin is worth tryin' for, don't ye think?"

The boys admitted that.

"We'll start for St. Andrew in the morning where I'm going to cable my folks in the States," said Will. "My father wouldn't hear of me making such a trip as you propose."

"Ye don't need to tell him nothin' about it. Send him word that ye've arrived here safe and sound, so he'll know ye're all right. Then say

while ye're down here ye're goin' to sail around the islands for a spell and then head for home. It won't take us long to run across for that there money and fetch it back. Then ye kin bank your share here and sail for home in a steamer like gents of fortin, and hire somebody to fetch the yacht after ye, payin' him well for a doin' of it."

The sailor's arguments were enticing and attracted the treasure-struck lads. If Will agreed to make the trip Jack was ready to accompany him, and where both went Larry would go, too. Finally Will told the mariner that he and Jack would talk it over and let him know in the morning, and with that assurance Jim Bludso took his departure.

The boys did talk the matter over very seriously."

Finally Will said:

"There's nothing to prevent us going if we really want to, Jack. I'm fairly flush in American funds which I dare say I can change into English gold in St. Andrew to-morrow. I'll cable my father that we've reached the Barbadoes safe and sound, and say a letter will follow with particulars. I'll say that we're going on another cruise at once and will be back in a short time. We'll write and mail our letters, provision the yacht and, with Jim Bludso aboard, who will be an able hand in case of any emergency, for he's a practical sailor, we'll sail for the Gold Coast, get the treasure and return as soon as we can."

"Whatever you say goes, Will," replied Jack. "To tell you the truth, I'd like nothing better than to go to Africa on this or any other profitable errand. I'm stuck on seeing the world, that is, as much of it as I can. So long as my folks know that I'm safe I don't care whether school keeps or not. So now you have my sentiments."

So it was decided to make the trip after the treasure of the ill-fated "Windsor Castle," lost more than fifty years before, and next morning they communicated their resolve to the sailor. He received it with a glint of satisfaction in his eyes, and told them they would not regret it. Had the boys been less enthusiastic, or more experienced in the ways of the world, they might have mistrusted the honesty of a strange mariner, who had a shifty look in his eyes, and was as hard as they come.

Unfortunately they had no suspicions of their new associate, and so the bargain was duly ratified between them. After breakfast the party sailed for St. Andrew, where they arrived in a couple of hours. Leaving Larry and Jim Bludso aboard they made their way to the principal hotel where Will had an interview with the proprietor, telling him who he was, and how his party came to be at the Barbadoes. The man recommended Will to an office where he could get his money changed into British currency, and told him where he would find the cable office. Will transacted his business and then the boys returned to the hotel where they took dinner. After the meal they each wrote and posted a long letter home, but did not hint that the cruise they were about to take was to Africa.

The next thing they did was to provision the yacht bountifully, and take aboard an extra supply of fresh water. A case of liquor added for the sailor's special benefit, and everything being in readiness they sailed next morning for the Gold Coast.

CHAPTER IX.—On The Gold Coast.

"So that's the Gold Coast?" said Jack Harding some weeks later, pointing out a thin blue line miles and miles ahead of the yacht "Sunbeam."

The words were addressed to Jim Bludso, who was seated at the tiller, steering. It was about six in the morning, and Jack had just come up on deck to relieve the sailor. They had had a very pleasant trip across the Atlantic unmarred by a single gale of any consequence. For days and days they had enjoyed fine weather with favorable slants of wind, that bore them along at a famous rate. The sailor's guess had been fulfilled, and now they were in sight of their destination.

"Ay, ay, my hearty; that's the Gold Coast sure enough," replied Bludso.

"I don't see how you can recognize it at such a distance," replied Jack.

"Cordin' to the log-line ye bought in St. Andrew this here craft has been makin' close on to 300 miles a day since we left Porto Praya in the Cape Verde Islands. We've steered a straight course for the Coast by compass, and there ain't been nothin' to put us out. This is the seventh day, and 'cordin' to my calculations we was due to raise land some time to-day. I've made due allowance for the ocean currents, so if that ain't the Gold Coast ye kin call me a liar and I won't squeal."

"Are we goin' to put into some port before we go to the wreck of the treasure ship? I'm afraid we'll need fresh water, and a number of other things."

"We'll put into Coomassie, or some other place," replied the sailor. "We want to have plenty of provisions aboard, for it may take some time to get out all the coin and bury what we can't take with us."

"What do you want to bury any of it for? If it's been safe where it is these fifty years back, it ought to remain so for a considerable time longer."

"It may be discovered any time by accident, my hearty. The British are spreadin' out more an' more all the time, and there's no tellin' but some of 'em may light upon the wreck, and after that there won't be no treasure left there. I don't believe in takin' chances. I discovered the wreck, and in course the treasure belongs to me by rights. I'm whackin' up with ye because I have to."

"On the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread at all," laughed Jack.

The sailor nodded. At that juncture Will made his appearance in the cockpit.

"There's the Gold Coast yonder, Will," said Jack, with a wave of his hand.

"How do you know that's the Gold Coast?" asked his companion, viewing the distant shore with great interest.

"Bludso says it is, and he ought to know something about it," replied Jack.

"How long will it take us to reach it?"

"We ought to reach it by noon," said the sailor. "Ye kin take yer spell at the wheel, I mean the tiller," to Jack. "I'll take a nap till grub is ready."

Jack steered straight for the coast line, which rapidly grew plainer till they could make out rocks and trees, and finally a big village nestling

at the foot of a series of hills that rose tier on tier behind to a considerable height in the extreme background, with the deep blue sky beyond. By that time breakfast was ready, and Larry was called outside to take the tiller. He had been too busy to notice before that the yacht was approaching land. When he saw it he gave a whoop.

"Is that Africa, I dunno?" he said.

"That's what it is, Larry. Feast your eyes on it while we are feasting on the grub you have prepared for us," replied Jack.

"Be me sowl, it's glad I am to see land once more, so I am," said the Irish boy. "It's toired I am of the say, though it's a foine passage we've had from the Barbadoes."

Jack and Will left him and entered the cabin. The former aroused Jim Bludso and told him that breakfast was ready.

"We ought to reach the shore in a couple of hours," said Jack. "I can make out a big village at the foot of the hills."

The sailor took the glass and went outside for a peep.

"If we get close in by noon we'll be doin' well," he said, "for the wind is droppin'."

"As we carry a deep keel we may not be able to get close in if the tide happens to be low," said Jack. "How then will we be able to get ashore, for we haven't any boat, you know."

The sailor told him they would find plenty of boatmen ready to take them ashore for a trifle. It was half-past eleven when their keel touched bottom within an eighth of a mile of the beach, and within a few minutes a dozen small boats came skimming out to the yacht. Every one of the occupants had something for sale, from fruit and vegetables to fetishes warranted to bring you good luck. Will bought a supply of the former, but none on board had any use for the latter, though Larry bargained for and bought an ugly little wooden image that the seller said was a sure antidote for the African fever. A bargain was struck with the chap from whom the fruit was purchased to take Jack and Will ashore, the sailor having no particular place to land.

In five minutes the two boys enjoyed the satisfaction of stepping upon the soil of the west coast of Africa—something they had hardly expected to do in all their lives before they embarked at the beginning of their eventful cruise. Looking about them they saw scores of negroes, but not a single white face. Most of the blacks were working away at one thing or another, but there were some who were industriously trying to kill time under the shade of the tropical trees. After surveying the beach and its denizens, Jack and Will started for the village to inspect it. When half way there they came across several thicklipped blacks scrubbing away for dear life at a big dark colored stone that seemed fit for nothing at all. They sweated at their task with as much energy as though a slave-driver stood over them with a whip.

"What in thunder are they polishing that stone for?" ejaculated Will.

"Looks like a foolish piece of business, doesn't it?" answered Jack.

The boys stopped and looked on in a kind of wonderment.

"Dat fetish bery good fetish, dat are," said a voice in the rear.

Looking around the two young Americans saw a most extraordinary personage. He was a portly black man of some age, for his woolly hair was white as snow, and his face was deeply lined with wrinkles. His costume consisted of a big cocked hat, evidently once the property of a British naval officer, surmounted by a plume of peacock feathers; an old and dilapidated red coat, decorated with a very tarnished epaulet on one shoulder, which met and terminated in the region of the stomach, leaving exposed a jetty-hued chest and a corporation of some size, and a pair of cavalry boots, much too large for the wearer, that reached to the knees, leaving the whole of his thighs in a state of nature.

In one hand this evidently distinguished individual carried a long-clay pipe, at which he sucked from time to time, and in the other a bright red cotton umbrella. Jack and Will couldn't help laughing at the remarkable figure he cut.

"He looks like the chief comedian in a comic opera," chuckled Jack.

"That's what he does," replied Will, with a grin.

The red-coated black man did not take offence at their merriment. Indeed, he laughed also, and proceeded to introduce himself.

"Pose you know me, or else kick up proper bobbery, eh? Me King Coffee, and bery great king 'deed. Dat my town yonder. Bery fine town. All these my people. Me glad to see young gentlemen. 'Haps 'duce youse'f."

He pushed his head out and drew it in repeatedly in such a comical way that the boys had all they could do to stifle their laughter.

"Let's give him the grand salute," said Jack. "Place your hand on the top of your head and bow as low as you can."

Each boy did this until their faces almost touched their knees.

"Dat am right; dat am bery first-rate," said King Coffee, complacently. "Pay proper 'spect to me. I am bery great king here. 'Pose you want see town me show you round. Dat bery great honor. No do 'cept to bery nice boy like you."

He opened his umbrella and took another draw at his pipe.

"See dat rock?" he continued, pointing with his pipe at the one the negroes were polishing. "Bery great fetish. Ten mans scrub dat rock all day, and all night, too. No stop. Keep fetish dat lib in dat rock in good humor, den nottin' happen."

Jack and Will now perceived that a spirit was supposed to reside in the rock, and that the outside of his residence was being so persistently scrubbed in order to propitiate him and put him in good temper. Such divinities were supposed by the Gold Coast negroes to dwell in other places just as queer, such as inside the trunk of every curiously shaped tree, in certain animals, in running water, and so forth. Leaving the fetish rock, King Coffee, accompanied by the two boys, walked on to the village.

Passing down a wide stream planted on each side with wild fig and umbrella trees—the latter so called from the dome-like shape of their drooping foliage—they presently came to the marketplace, and here a most animated scene was presented. Hundreds of black people of both sexes were buying, bargaining, chaffing and quarrelling. The intending purchaser would almost invariably seize hold of what he or she wanted and bid a

certain price, whereupon the seller would just as determinedly lay on to the other end and demand just double the sum. Then the jabbering that ensued between them almost defies description. At one moment you'd think the parties were going to fly at each other's throats, the next that they were anxious to swear eternal friendship.

This sort of thing was going on in at least a score or two places at once, and the two boys were almost deafened by the babel of sounds that arose on all sides. King Coffee surveyed the scene with placid indifference, occasionally blowing whiffs of tobacco smoke from his thick lips. The boys were greatly interested, as well as amused, by all they saw in the village. Being under the king's wing they were objects of respect as well as curiosity. The women were clad for the most part in a bright-hued petticoat reaching just below their knees, and a still brighter nondescript head-dress, that set off their woolly locks and black, perspiring faces. Then there were men and children of both sexes up to a dozen years of age. There were enormous gourds, melons, pineapples, and appetizing vegetables exposed for sale at prices equivalent to a couple of cents of American money. Under some of the covered sheds long rows of shark's fins were offered to the public, these being considered an especial dainty; while in other sheds one could purchase tasty little joints of monkey and crocodile.

Jack and Will had the time of their lives during the hour they passed in the villages. Their royal guide was invaluable, for in his broken English he explained many things to them, and his high rank sufficed to clear the crowds from their path.

After taking them through the village the king led them back to the shore and then broadly intimated that he thought his services worth a bottle of rum.

"All right," replied Will; "we'll send it to you by the boatman."

King Coffee seemed to put little faith in the boatman, for he declared he would accompany the boys to the yacht and get it himself.

"Howly poker! What koind of scarecrow is this, I dunno?" ejaculated Larry when the boat reached the yacht with the king seated conspicuously in the stern.

Will invited the king aboard, but he declined to leave the boat, and so Larry was sent for a bottle of Holland gin. As soon as his majesty clutched it he bade good-by to the boys and ordered the boatman to row shoreward. The boys had eaten plentifully of fruit ashore, but they found room for the dinner that Larry served up. Jim Bludso instructed the boys to find out in what direction Coomassie lay. The king told them it was about five miles to the south, and they communicated this intelligence to the sailor. The mariner would sail for that port at once and provide the necessary implements for their expedition. Accordingly, after dinner the anchor was hoisted, sail made, and under the influence of a light breeze they started southward.

CHAPTER X.—The Wreck Of The "Windsor Castle."

It was just one week later that the "Sunbeam" entered the crooked estuary of a narrow river

and began to follow its winding, snake-like course inland. There was just wind enough to propel the fleet yacht along at the rate of a couple of miles an hour, and sudden darkness overtook them in the tortuous channel. They kept on, however, for a star-studded sky furnished them with all the light necessary for navigation; but they didn't go very far after all, for the wind soon died entirely away, leaving them becalmed in the stream. As there was a strong ebb current the anchor was dropped and the yacht came to a rest between two overhanging banks thick with tropical verdure. Their supper consisted chiefly of fruit and coffee, and during the short time it took Larry to prepare the latter he found the little forepeak a regular sweat-box. An hour later the moon came up, and a more glorious night the boys had never seen. About nine o'clock the boys proposed to take a bath in the river before turning in for the night on deck, but Bludso advised them not to, for he knew from experience that there were crocodiles in that river, as well as up the numerous creeks.

No watch was kept that night, and the four occupants of the yacht slept tranquilly in spite of the hideous sounds made by the howling monkeys and other species of beast and bird that were very much alive after darkness fell on the face of nature. Early next morning they resumed their way up the river under the impetus of a breeze which sprang up with the rising of the sun. This breeze was light and it was nearly noon when the sailor turned the head of the boat into a wide-mouthed creek, the banks of which were thickly screened with trees and tropical vegetation. After proceeding only a short distance the creek turned to the south, and then right before their eyes loomed the weather-beaten hull of a stranded ship.

"Hurrah!" shouted Will excitedly. "There's the ship."

"That's the wreck of the 'Windsor Castle,' is it?" Jack asked Jim Bludso.

"Ay, ay, my hearty," replied the sailor.

"And you've seen the money bags in her hold?"

"I seen one of 'em. And where one is the others must be, for I've heard that she carried \$2,000,000 in gold and silver coin."

"You ripped the bag open to make sure of what it contained, I suppose?"

"No; I found it ripped open already, and some of the silver gone."

"Then you can't tell but somebody has been here since and got away with the treasure," said Jack, rather aghast at the bare idea of such a possibility.

"That must have been the bag from which the money was taken by the two natives who, according to the newspaper account, spent it so freely in Coomassie that they were arrested," said Will. "That happened more than ten years ago. They lost their lives, you remember, at the time they started to return for some more of the money."

"You carried some of the silver away with you, didn't you?" asked Jack to the sailor.

"I took about two hundred coins. That was all I could carry," answered Bludso.

"Well, we'll soon see if any one has been here since you were here," said Will. "I hope not, for it would be a terrible disappointment to us, after all our trouble and our expectations, if we found

that the wreck had been looted. The creek was a deep one, so that the yacht was able to approach the shore so close that Bludso was able to leap on to the bank from her bows. He carried the mooring line with him, and tied it securely to one of the trees. The three boys followed one after the other. The wreck stood upright, and was deeply imbedded in the soil. Her masts had all gone by the board, and her upper works were smashed in. The hull, however, had stood the winters and summers of fifty years with extraordinary tenacity, and seemed in little danger of going to pieces for many years yet. There were holes here and there where, for one cause or another, the wood had rotted quicker than elsewhere, but on the whole the boys had not expected to find the luckless "Windsor Castle" in such a fair state of preservation.

After giving the boys a chance to view the exterior of the wreck to their satisfaction, the sailor led his young companions to the bows, which was almost flush with the top of a low bank, and they found no difficulty in reaching her fore-castle deck.

It was full of holes, and care had to be exercised in crossing it.

Descending to the main deck, where the stumps of two of the masts still pointed to the heavens, they found it in a better state of preservation.

The two big hatches were on, and the shreds of rotten canvas that still clung around their edges showed that they were battened down when the vessel went ashore.

There were many holes, and the wood was soft and punky in spots, but there was only one opening of any large size visible, and it was through this that the sailor penetrated to the hold when he discovered the wreck.

"There's nothin' in the cabin or staterooms, except the table and some chairs and things that seem to hold out. Everything else has rotted away," said Bludso. "Ye kin look if ye want. There's no danger, for the floor is solid enough."

The boys decided to look, and while they were satisfying their curiosity the sailor dropped into the hold to see if the money bag was where he had seen it.

"So we are actually aboard of the 'Windsor Castle,'" said Will as they entered the cabin, which was light enough, as the deck above was full of holes.

"Apparently we are. I noticed the faint tracings of the letters WIND and TLE, with a long space between, over the door," replied Jack.

"Sure, it's a wonder there's a board left after lyin' here fifty years," remarked Larry. "I've known strong houses in Ireland to fall apart in less time than that whin left to themselves."

"I guess the dryness of the atmosphere had something to do with keeping the vessel intact," replied Jack.

They looked into all the staterooms and the steward's pantry, but there was nothing left of their contents but dust, rotten shreds of cloth, and the remains of the bunks and other stationary attachments.

There wasn't even a single skeleton of passengers or crew visible.

As soon as their survey was over they returned to the main deck and found the sailor missing.

"Jim Bludso, ahoy!" shouted Jack.

"Ahoy, my hearties!" came a muffled voice through the big hole in the deck.

"He's down in the hold looking for the money bags," said Will. "Let's go down."

One by one they descended into the semi-twilight of the hold, which was filled with the rotting remains of the general cargo.

"Where are you, Jim?" called out Jack.

"Here. The money is all right," came back the reply.

The hearts of the boys beat with suppressed excitement.

No chance prowler had visited the wreck since Bludso's discovery, and so the treasure was there and intact for them to carry away in the yacht.

All their expectations were about to be fulfilled, and they were on the brink of becoming young Croesuses after a fashion.

The very idea was a thrilling one, and they advanced into the hold with great eagerness, unmindful of the many obstacles that lay in their path.

They found Jim Bludso squatting over the mouth of a torn bag shoveling up handfuls of tarnished coin about the size of fifty-cent pieces, and letting them run like water between his fingers while he feasted his eyes on them, and his ears with the musical jingle.

Many of the coins were bright, for it was only the top layers that were black or coppery from the oxidizing action of the air.

The sailor had evidently been thrusting his hairy and sinewy arms deep down into the sack and disturbed some of the less affected ones.

The bags containing the silver, judging from the one in evidence, were larger and very heavy, as much as two strong men would move with great exertion.

"Come down here, one of ye, and shove yer fist into this stuff," said Bludso. "I'll warrant ye've never handled so much pure silver in yer life afore."

Jack, being in advance, accepted the invitation, while Will and Larry looked on, the latter with bulging eyes that would have done credit to a lobster.

"Mother of Moses! Sure, it's rich we are foriver!" he exclaimed.

"Where's the rest of the money bags?" asked Jack.

"Somewhere under this rubbish. Where one is the others must be near at hand," said the sailor.

"Well, let's see if they are," said Jack.

Accordingly he and Bludso began clearing away the debris around them.

It wasn't long before they unearthed a second bag, closed tightly at the neck, with the seal of the East India Company on it.

"I guess there's no doubt about all the money being here," said Jack.

"Not the least," replied the sailor, "and I reckon the sooner we get it aboard the yacht the better."

The boys thought so too,

"It's about dinner time now," said Will. "After we've had our dinner we'll start in and transship the coin."

All hands being more or less hungry, it was agreed to defer operations for an hour or so.

They left the hold and the wreck and returned to the yacht, where Larry got busy with his

culinary duties, which were not very extensive, as their bill-of-fare mainly consisted of fruit and canned meat.

CHAPTER XI.—Surprised by the Natives.

At the conclusion of the meal they went ashore and sat down under a wide spreading tree for an hour's rest previous to beginning the work of getting the treasure out of the hold.

"It's going to be something of a job to get those money bags out of the hold," said Will.

"We'll rig up a tackle with the ropes and blocks we got at Coomassie, and h'ist 'em out," said the sailor. "The bags bein' under the main hatch, the fust thing we'll do is to get that hatch off. The four of us kin do that easy enough."

"I know a better way," put in Jack.

"What is it?" asked Will.

"We've got an axe aboard. It ought to be a simple matter to batter a big hole in the side of the wreck and take the treasure out that way."

After some discussion it was decided to follow Jack's idea as to the final disposition of the treasure, and all hands now being ready for work, Larry was sent to the yacht to fetch the axe.

"I'll go aboard and let ye know jest where to make the hole," said Bludso.

"All right," replied Jack. "Knock on the side at the best place and we'll break in there."

The sailor started off and the two boys saw him disappear over the bows of the wreck. Larry soon got back with the axe, and Will noticed that he had his revolver in his hip pocket.

"What did you bring my revolver ashore for?" he asked.

"Sure, I thought I'd see if I could shoot wan of thim monkeys that's been makin' faces at us iver since we've been sittin' under thot tree," he said.

"I'd prefer you wouldn't; but you're your own boss. If Will is satisfied to let you shoot monkeys with his revolver I don't see how I can prevent you."

The discussion was cut short by a pounding on the inside of the vessel's hull. The sailor was notifying them where to begin work. Jack grabbed the axe, and going up to the wreck struck the timbers a heavy blow at the spot whence the pounding came. The blow knocked a big piece out of the vessel's side. While his two companions watched him he rapidly enlarged the hole. Larry forgot about his purpose of shooting a monkey or two and began to help the good work along by pulling away the fractured planks. Will stood back ready to relieve Jack as soon as he got tired of the exercise. At that moment Tupper heard a succession of strange sounds coming apparently from the deck of the wreck. He glanced up and started back in dismay.

"Look, look!" cried Will in a startled tone as Jack raised the axe to enlarge the hole.

"Great Scott!" gasped Jack, glancing upward.

The deck of the deserted old hulk was alive with savage-looking black men armed with spears.

"Bedad!" gasped Larry. "What kind of lay-thins is these, I dunno?"

Fearing trouble, Will, who was no coward, stepped forward and snatched his revolver from Larry's pocket.

"Jim! Jim Bludso!" shouted Jack.

"Here I am, my hearty," replied the sailor,

sticking his head out of the hole. "What's wanted?"

"We're in a bad fix," replied Jack, his face aglow with excitement and anxiety.

"What d'ye mean?"

"The deck of this vessel is full of negroes with spears. Don't you hear them above you? They're looking down at us, and may take it into their heads to capture us right off the reel. We must retréat to the yacht at once."

The sailor leaned out as far as he could and looked upward. What he saw made him utter a volley of imprecations. He recognized the rascals as part of a savage tribe of wandering Afghans who had nearly captured him when he was on his way up the coast to Coomassie.

"Make for the boat at once," he said, starting to pull himself through the fracture in the vessel's side.

The boys darted for the yacht at once. The blacks awoke at once from their inactivity. With a wild yell they began springing down from the deck in a stream. The boys would surely have been captured but for the intrepidity of Will Tupper. He stopped and began emptying the chambers of his revolver at them. More by good luck than design, every bullet took effect. As the savage warriors began to drop their advance was checked, and the boys, taking advantage of their indecision, gained the yacht, Jack stopping long enough to unship the mooring rope from the tree. Then they waited for Jim Bludso to join them. But that was beyond his power, as two stout blacks caught hold of him as he extricated himself from the hold, and the balance set up a yell of triumph.

"They've got Jim," cried Jack, "and they'll get us in a minute if we remain close to the shore any longer."

With that he gave the light yacht a shove, sprang on to the bows, and the boat backed out into the creek. While in Coomassie Will had purchased four rifles with a plentiful supply of ammunition, as Jim Bludso had told the boys that they might run across unfriendly natives. These guns now came in handy, and they were immediately brought on deck and placed in readiness for instant use, while the young treasure hunters proceeded to get sail on the yacht, for, fortunately, there was a light breeze blowing.

"It's too bad to leave Jim in the clutches of those blacks, but I don't see how we can help him under the circumstances," said Will.

"We can't; but we won't desert him, just the same," replied Jack. "We'll try to rescue him after we give these chaps the slip."

The wind caught the sail and the yacht forged slowly down the creek toward the river. The natives, who numbered about a dozen, including the wounded ones Will had laid low with his revolver, gathered on the shore, shook their spears menacingly at the yacht and filled the air with their yells of disappointment. The boat soon left them out of sight when it rounded the turn in the creek, and their cries gradually died away. The boys sailed down into the river and then came to anchor in mid-stream when they saw they had not been followed.

CHAPTER XII.—In the Gasp of a Python.

"Now what is going to be our next move?" Jack.

"Sail back up the creek after a time and then you and I will set out with our rifles and track the blacks to their camp, or wherever they are going, leaving Larry in charge of the boat. The moment we land he will shove off into the stream and anchor, and keep a sharp watch with the two rifles he'll have cocked and ready for business," said Will.

"Begorra! s'pose the black nagurs nab yez, what'll I do thin at all, at all?" asked Larry anxiously.

"Don't worry, Larry; in that case you'd be better off than we were," replied Jack. "We'll look after ourselves pretty sharp. See that you look well after the yacht and your own skin."

After waiting an hour, by which time they believed the blacks had departed from the vicinity of the wreck, the yacht was sailed back up the creek to the wreck. The neighborhood appeared to be deserted, but before landing the boys carefully examined the hulk and immediate vicinity through the telescope. Taking their rifles and a small supply of provisions, Jack and Will finally stepped ashore and looked for the tracks of the native party. These were easily made out as well as the direction in which the blacks with their prisoner had departed. Waving adieu to Larry, who at once shoved the yacht off from the shore, they started off into the tropical vegetation, after taking their bearings with a traveling compass Will had purchased in Coomassie.

"This is a fresh adventure which we never counted on," said Jack as they trudged forward, keeping their eyes on the trail, where amongst the print of naked feet they could make out the impression of the sailor's boot soles.

"Until we are safe from Africa with the money we won't be sure of what may happen to us," answered Will.

"That's right. We're in uncivilized territory, and must take things as they come."

They walked along for more than an hour, the scenery continuing the same all the way. The voice of nature was still under the hot glare of the afternoon sun, save for the buzzing of innumerable insects. No birds raised their glad songs in the leafy solitude, nor did they see any signs of wild beasts or snakes. Another hour passed, and still the tracks led on straight through the trackless wilderness. Then it was they saw the first animal since leaving the creek. A huge ape suddenly dropped down from a tree branch in front of them and stood regarding them with a grimacing face. The boys didn't like his looks, for he was big and strong enough to give them a whole lot of trouble.

They cocked their rifles in case they found it necessary to use them in their own protection, and diverging from their course so as to circle around the beast, they kept on. He made no attempt to follow them, though he chattered at them in a very lively way, and they presently left him behind, much to their relief. They now entered a section of country well covered with trees, though it could scarcely be called a wood, as the trees were some distance apart. There were places, however, where they were close together. They were mostly cottonwood trees, though the boys did not recognize that fact, and were interspersed here and there with silver acacia. The trees were connected by festoons of creepers, adorned with

gorgeous flowers, as ropes connect the masts of a ship.

The undergrowth was thick and rank, yet they were able to track the natives and their prisoner without much trouble. They occasionally trod on glittering green lizards that lay sunning themselves in their path. Large brilliant-hued butterflies were to be seen continually, flying around them or resting on the lovely tinted flowers on which they frequently alighted. Suddenly they lost the trail at a babbling brook and they came to a full stop.

"It doesn't seem to be continued on the other side," said Jack. "The rascals may have gone up or down this stream. The question is, which direction did they take?"

"It may save time if you go a short distance down the stream while I'll go up," suggested Will. "We mustn't go too far if we're not successful in locating the tracks of the rascals, but come right back to this spot. We'll mark it with this rotten tree which we'll throw across the stream at this point. Whoever strikes the trail will shout to the other, and if he gets no reply he must come back here."

"All right," agreed Jack.

They threw the tree across and then started off on their different routes. Jack hadn't proceeded more than a hundred yards when he saw where the native party had come out of the water and resumed their way through the underbrush. He was about to shout when he heard Will utter a terrible scream for help.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Jack. "Will is in trouble."

He turned around and ran back the way he came, guided by the frantic cries of his companion. Bursting into a small glade, whence the cries issued, Jack beheld a sight that transfixed him with horror. Will was dangling about a yard above the ground in the coils of a huge python. The reptile must have been at least thirty feet long, and while three folds of its tail were twined around the smooth trunk of a peppermint tree the rest of its length hung pendulum-like therefrom with one coil around Will's body. There was still sufficient length of neck for the terrible-looking creature to make another coil, but it had not done so as yet. It had twisted its large flat head round, and, with its great, glassy, metallic and scintillating eyes was glaring at its victim with hungry lust.

Will's cries had ceased for the python was fascinating him with its stony stare, preparatory to making another coil and then crushing him to death. The head of the slimy monster swayed rhythmically to and fro. Its jaw opened to emit a shrill hissing sound, like escaping steam. Its forked tongue played lightning-like before Will's staring eyes. Jack, after the first thrill of horror and dismay, recovered control of himself and advanced with great resolution to his companion's rescue. He cocked his rifle and circled around to get Will out of range.

Jack knelt and tried to get a sure bead on the python's moving head. After several attempts he fired quickly. As the smoke floated away he saw that the python was whirling its head to and fro, blindly and at random. There was a red gash in it. As Jack was trying for another shot the snake swung its folds around and dropped Will like he might a hot stove that he had seized

by mistake. Watching his chance, Jack darted forward, seized Will by the arm and dragged him away. The python was done for, as the heavy ball had passed through his brain, and Jack, carrying his companion in his arms, left the reptile to his death agonies. A dash of water soon revived Will, and he sat up without assistance, but his nerves had suffered a terrible shock and he trembled violently.

"You saved my life, Jack," he quavered, "and I shall be grateful to you as long as I live."

"That's all right, old man," replied Jack. "It was my duty to do it, wasn't it? You'd have done the same thing for me."

CHAPTER XIII.—The Rescue of Miss Bishop

"It will soon be dark," said Will, after looking at his watch, "and darkness falls like a shot in these latitudes. They say the animals come out after nightfall, so we had better look for some spot to camp where we can light a circle of fires for our protection."

"I guess we can reach that line of hills yonder before long, and that will be a better place to roost than where we are," replied Jack.

"Then let's hustle."

They increased their speed, but darkness caught them before they had reached the elevated ground. Suddenly the underbrush ceased and they came into a large open space. Right before them flashed several fires, and they saw a crowd of dark-skinned natives squatting about them eating their evening meal. Two wandering parties had evidently come together, for the boys counted over forty blacks in the camp.

"We've caught our party, I guess, but it seems to have been reinforced by many others," said Jack. "Here is where we've got to go slow or we'll be in a peck of trouble. We can't hope to cope successfully with the whole of that bunch."

"The first thing we must do is to locate Jim. If we move cautiously they may not get on to our presence," replied Will.

"Come on, then; we'll move up closer."

They got down on their hands and knees and crawled slowly and silently toward the Ashantee camp. By degrees they got close enough to see every one in it distinctly in the glare furnished by the fires.

"Say, isn't that a white girl tied to that tree?" said Jack.

"Yes, so it is," replied Will in surprise.

"Why, there is Jim hobnobbing with one of the natives, who seems to be of more importance than the others. He isn't a prisoner at all. I wonder how he came the confidence game over the black? Jim must have a silvery tongue when it comes to dealing with black amours," said Jack in some astonishment at the complexion of affairs, so different from what the boys had expected.

The boys crouched down in a little thicket that stood apart by itself. At that moment the black leader and Jim Bludso arose and, leaving the fire, came toward the spot where the boys were concealed.

"They're coming this way, Jack; what shall we do?"

"Nothing. Let them come. They won't see us

unless they walk right on top of us," replied Jack coolly.

The sailor and the Ashantee came close to the thicket and then stopped.

"If I get the boys ashore where ye kin nab 'em, and give ye two," here Jim held up two fingers, "bottles of rum, ye'll agree to let me go at the cri'k, and ye'll go away yourselves? Is that a bargain?"

"Ugh! Yes. Me fix all right. All me want is boy. One shoot three, four my people. No stand dat. Me fix dem to stakes, head down, and let hyena eat."

The Ashantee could talk and understand English very fairly, it appeared. Jack and Will were aghast at the duplicity of the sailor. To save his own skin he intended to turn traitor to his friends and betray them into the hands of the savage natives. It was not what they had expected of him, and it was lucky for them that they had learned his intentions and could be on their guard.

"Dat right. We go dere. Hide in bush. Um try play trick we t'row spear. Nebber miss um aim. 'Pose um do right t'ing dem um go free, we go 'way with boy."

"I'll do the right thing, don't you worry. The boys are nothin' to me. I was goin' to shake 'em, anyway, as soon as they had helped me load boat."

"Load boat? What um want carry 'way?" asked the Ashantee curiously.

"Wood from the wreck, o' course," replied the sailor glibly.

"Wood not much good. Plenty rot," said the native.

"There's lot of good wood in it."

"Build new boat, eh?"

"No; make house with wood."

"Um! We go back. Sleep soon. Start soon sun come up."

The pair of rascals then walked back to the camp.

"What do you think of Jim now?" said Jack.

"He's a scoundrel," replied Will angrily. "The idea of him making a deal to put us in the hands of those black scamps."

"He intended to do us, anyway. Did you hear what he said? That he was going to shake us, anyway, as soon as we had helped load the yacht. I'll bet the villain intended to leave us here to starve and sail away to Coomassie with as much of the treasure as the boat could carry safely."

"This is a nice return after the trouble we've taken to come all the way out here to try and rescue him. Fine gratitude, isn't it?"

"It's a good thing we came. We would have stepped into the trap to-morrow and our goose would have been well cooked. Now we know what to expect, and we'll take care not be caught," said Jack.

"We'd better get back right away."

"Hold on. Those blacks have a girl prisoner yonder. We must try and rescue her in place of Jim."

"How are you going to do it?"

"I don't know. We must watch and wait a while. While we're doing that we'll have a cold bite. I'm deuced hungry."

"So am I." The two boys unslung their packages of food from their backs and proceeded to make a meal. When they had finished the blacks had all lain down and appeared to be asleep. The boys,

however, were in no hurry to make the desperate venture they had in view. They didn't propose to take any more chances than they could help. So they waited another hour.

"You wait here, Will, and I'll go forward and attempt the rescue alone. If the rascals wake up and go for me use your rifle. Between us we ought to make a lot of them pretty sick, and we may be able to escape into the brush in the confusion."

Will was loath to let his companion stand the brunt of the venture, but Jack told him it was the best plan he could think of. So shaking Will by the hand, he started forward like a snake in the grass. The girl was tied to a tree that stood a little way from the main bunch of sleepers. The nearest black lay about two yards from her. As Jack drew near he saw by the red glare of the fires that she was pretty and well dressed.

How she had been captured by the rascals of course he could not imagine. A great difficulty presented itself to him, and that was how to attract her attention and let her know that a friend was near without startling her into making some sound that probably would arouse the blacks, who might be counted upon as light sleepers. He finally decided on a plan. He advanced like a shadow till he got close behind the tree. Then rising softly up he placed one hand over her mouth. She uttered a stifled cry of terror, but Jack choked it off and whispered in her ear.

"Be silent for your life, miss. I have come to save you. Nod your head if you understand me," said Jack.

There was a pause, and then the fair girl collected her wits and nodded.

"You promise not to make a sound? If you do you will sacrifice me as well as yourself."

She shook her head.

He took his hand away, and with the knife he already had open in his hand began to cut her bonds. In a few minutes she was free, and Jack, taking her by the hand, gently led her away from the camp. Not a word was spoken between them till they reached the thicket from which Will had been nervously watching the course of events with his cocked rifle ready for immediate use.

"Come, Will, let's get out of here as soon as we can," said Jack. "The moment this girl's escape is discovered there will be the dickens to pay. What is your name, miss?"

"Hattie Bishop," she replied shyly.

"Mine is Jack Harding, and this is my particular friend, Will Tupper."

She nodded and smiled as the boys hurried her toward the underbrush, now alive with all kinds of diabolical sounds.

"I'm afraid it isn't safe to go through this place in the dark," said Will, remembering with a shudder his terrible experience with the python.

"We've got to chance it," replied Jack. "We can't stay around here till daylight. We'd have to fight for our lives and be captured in the end. We must reach the creek by morning, for those rascals will probably make a move by sunrise, and by the time they arrive at the wreck we ought to be down the river a bit out of their reach."

Will made no further opposition, and they entered the underbrush, trusting to luck and their rifles to carry them through safely.

CHAPTER XIV.—The Midnight Retreat.

"You must pardon me for not thanking you before for rescuing me from those Ashantees, Mr. Harding," said Hattie Bishop; "but I have been so upset by my terrible experience since they carried me off from the home of a friend I was visiting that I am sure you will excuse my delay in expressing to you the gratitude I feel toward you."

"That's all right, Miss Bishop. My friend and I came here to rescue the white sailor you must have noticed in the camp. He was our companion in a trip across the Atlantic in Tupper's yacht, which now lies at anchor in a creek four hours' journey from here. The reason we did not try to save him after coming here to do so is because we accidentally overheard a conversation which took place between him and the leader of those blacks soon after we got here. He planned in order to save himself to betray us into the hands of that crowd, and that settles him with us for good and all. Seeing you bound a prisoner to the tree, we determined to rescue you, and we are both glad to know that we succeeded, at least up to this point. We hope to land you on board of the yacht before daylight, and with any kind of luck I feel confident we will do so," said Jack.

As they tramped through the luxuriant vegetation the girl soon got on social terms with her rescuers, and told them the story of her capture by the Ashantees. She said she was the daughter of William Bishop, the American consul at Monrovia, in Liberia. She had been persuaded to visit a dear friend of hers, the wife of a missionary, who lived in Kumassie, a town in the Ashantee land something over a hundred miles from the Gold Coast.

The previous afternoon she had gone with a native guide to visit the ruins of a picturesque idol house. While there she and her conductor were attacked by a small band of unfriendly natives who were hovering about the neighborhood. The guide was killed and she was carried off to the rendezvous of the band. Then the entire party set off at once for the coast, taking her with them.

She learned that they intended holding her for a ransom, the terms of which she was told had already been communicated to the missionary. They intended to carry her about from place to place until the ransom was paid, when they promised to return her to the party who brought the ransom. The boys sympathized with her, and assured her that they would take her to her parents in Monrovia in their yacht as soon as circumstances would permit. Jack then explained to her how they came to be in Africa.

He told her the story of their strenuous experience since the day they had been caught in the fog off the Long Island shore. She marvelled much at their nerve in sailing from the Barbadoes to the coast of Africa in such a small yacht. They were well on their way back to the creek, guided by Will's pocket compass, by the time Jack had finished the narrative of their adventures up to date. It must not be supposed that they had gone thus far without encountering many alarming interruptions from the prowling denizens of the district.

Several times they were forced to kill a jackal

or two when those vicious brutes got too inquisitive. Once they met a big python on their way, but put him to flight with a bullet in his snaky hide, which didn't do him any material harm. Monkeys without number bothered their progress at times, but they were not forced to shoot one. Fortunately they did not meet with any worse animals than those described during their eventual journey of nearly six hours, which seemed almost endless to them. It was after three in the morning when they finally reached the creek and the wreck of the "Windsor Castle."

The moon had been up for some hours, and the yacht lay silent and motionless at her moorings about midway between the banks. Larry was not in sight, and as the cabin door was closed, there seemed no doubt that he had gone to sleep. As there was no wind, it would be rather a difficult matter for the Irish lad to bring the yacht up to the shore, so Jack said there wasn't any use of awakening him for the present. So they marched up the bank and seated themselves on the bow of the wreck, where they remained talking together until the sun rose.

A light breeze came with sunrise, and then Jack discharged his rifle. The report awoke the echoes of the neighborhood, and it also aroused Larry. He came out into the cockpit and was amazed to see a girl instead of Jim Bludso with his associates. Jack motioned him to work the yacht in toward the shore. He immediately ran up the jib, and then hoisted the anchor by means of a drum windlass, after which he ran to the tiller and steered the yacht up to the bank.

"Didn't yez foind Jim?" he asked.

"We found him, all right," replied Jack.

"And where is he?"

"I'll tell you all about him presently. Give the young lady your hand and help her aboard."

Larry did so.

"Who is she, and where did yez foind her?" he asked as Jack stepped aboard.

"You'll learn by and by. Now push off."

Larry was clearly puzzled, but he said nothing further. It was his duty simply to follow orders, and not to be unduly inquisitive as to why the orders were given. The yacht was shoved off into the stream, and Jack's intention was to head down the stream to the river. The wind, however, suddenly died out completely, leaving them becalmed midstream.

"This is hard luck," said Will. "Those rascals will be here in two or three hours. If the whole bunch comes, and they find we refuse to walk into their trap; they may be able to overpower us by force of numbers. I wouldn't be surprised if they would be able to fling their spears as far as this with good aim."

"Sure, whot are yez talkin' about? Do yez expect thim nagurs to come here ag'in?" asked Larry in some trepidation.

"We do," replied Jack. "They're coming after us."

"Comin' after us! Howly Moses!"

"Don't get scared. We have four magazine rifles to defend ourselves with, so I guess we'll be able stand them off. Can you shoot, Miss Bishop?" asked Jack.

"Yes," she replied. "I've fired off a rifle many a time."

"Then I guess we can depend on you to do your

share of the defense. You seem to be a brave girl, and not likely to faint in an emergency," said Jack with a glance of admiration, for all boys admire plucky girls. "Now you must be dead tired out, so the cabin is at your disposal. Go in and lie down, and when we think your services are needed we'll call upon you."

He led Miss Bishop into the cabin, the style of which quite captivated her. Will's bed was made up, so Jack told the girl to take possession of it. As she felt the need of rest very much, for she had slept scarcely any since she was captured, she lay down on the outside, just as she was, and soon fell into a sound sleep. When Jack returned to the cockpit he found Will narrating to Larry the adventures they had met with since leaving the yacht the afternoon before.

"Get us a cup of coffee, Larry, and then Will and I will turn in for an hour or two of sleep. You must keep a sharp watch and when Jim appears on the bank and hails you wake us up and we will attend to him," said Jack.

CHAPTER XV.—The Trap That Didn't Work.

Larry had a long watch, for instead of the sailor appearing in two hours or so, noon came and he had not appeared. The truth of the matter was, when the Ashantees woke up at sunrise and found their female prisoner gone, they started off to search for her in four different directions, instead of taking up their line of march for the creek. The party led by the chief of the band, with Jim Bludso under his eye, and which consisted of about ten men, exclusive of themselves, started to hunt through the underbrush. After several hours of search, during which they were well scattered, they finally came together in the glade where the dead carcass of the python shot by Jack lay, half eaten by jackals.

A consultation took place between Bimbo, the head man, and his followers, and it was decided to leave the quest to the other three parties and go on to the creek. Bimbo was now more anxious than ever to get his clutches on the three lads, promising himself ample revenge for the injuries Will had inflicted on four of his party with the revolver. Many hours having been already lost, they pushed forward to the creek, arriving there about noon. Larry was eating a luscious melon, and had grown careless in his watch. Jack, Will and Miss Bishop were still asleep. Suddenly Larry's attention was attracted to the shore by the voice of the sailor hailing him. Turning his head, he saw Jim Bludso standing just in front of the thick bushes.

Right behind the rascally old salt, but carefully screened by the underbrush, squatted Bimbo, while his men were hidden near by, their greedy eyes fastened on the small craft which lay well out of their reach.

"Yacht ahoy!" roared Bludso again.

"Ahoy yourself!" replied Larry, munching away at the melon.

"Bring the boat in to the bank, and take me aboard," said the sailor.

"How kin I, faith, whin there's no wind?" replied Larry innocently.

Bludso evidently had not thought of that difficulty in his eagerness to fulfill his bargain with Bimbo. He scratched his head and looked per-

plexed. Clearly here was a quandary neither he nor the black man had figured upon.

"Pull up the anchor," he said. "Maybe ye'll drift this way."

"Sure, I couldn't think of takin' all that trouble. Yez moight swim out if yez are so anxious to get here," replied Larry with a grin.

There were cogent reasons why Jim Bludso couldn't avail himself of this invitation. First and most important was the fact that he knew a spear would be through his body if he made the attempt; and, secondly, there were crocodiles, sleeping with one eye open, to be reckoned on. Bludso scratched his head again and seemed to be up a tree. After thinking the situation over for a minute or two he abruptly turned on his heel and entered the underbrush. His purpose was to consult with Bimbo. Larry finished his melon and heaved a sigh of contentment, for it had tasted good, and satisfied the cravings of his appetite. He didn't think the situation serious enough yet for him to arouse his companions, who still slept on, for they were tired. After the lapse of ten minutes the sailor reappeared.

"Say, my hearty," he said persuasively, "ain't yer goin' to raise the anchor and let the boat drift over? I don't want to stay here all day, for I'm 'most starved to death."

"She wouldn't drift over, she'd drift down," replied Larry.

"Ye can't tell. I'm a sailor, and it strikes me she'll drift over."

"Me orders are to stay here."

Seeing that Larry wouldn't do anything, the sailor gave up and squatted down. Ten minutes more passed and Larry was chuckling to himself at the disappointed look on the rascal's face when suddenly a long spear came whizzing through the air directly at him. Larry caught a glimpse of its shaft glistening in the sunlight, and with a yell fell flat on his face out of sight. The spear passed over the boat and disappeared with a splash into the creek. Larry's yell aroused Jack and Will, and they sat up. As they looked across to the shore Bimbo and his ten followers, finding that artifice had failed, and impatient at the delay, sprang with yells from the underbrush. They laid hold of Jim Bludso, bound him with creeping vines till he was helpless, and then they commenced making a great splash in the water with the heads of their spears. In a few moments the snouts of three crocodiles appeared near the spot. Bimbo stepped forward and called out to the yacht.

"Um boy, listen. 'Pose um no come 'shore crocodile eat dis man. Um come, give all bottle rum got 'board, den we let um go, dis man, too. What um say?"

"What does he take us for?" said Will. Fools?"

"No come," replied Jack, believing the whole thing a big bluff to entice them over. "No wind."

Bimbo spoke to his followers. Two of them seized the sailor and carried him down to the edge of the creek.

"Me count t'ree," shouted Bimbo. "'Pose um no give in man go to crocodile. Me no fool."

"Do you think he really means business?" said Will.

"Looks like it."

"That would be tough on Jim."

"Can't help it. We're not going to put ourselves in their hands. They might throw us to

the crocodiles instead of keeping us for the hyenas. Jim made a bargain with that rascal, and if the fellow plays him false it is not our fault. Remember, we've got Miss Bishop to protect as well as ourselves," said Jack.

"One!" said Bimbo, holding up one finger, while the two men who held Jim Bludso began to swing his body to and fro preparatory to launching it apparently into the river.

"Two!" cried Bimbo, holding up another finger.

"Hold on there!" said Jack, raising his rifle.

"Um give in?" asked Bimbo, while the men stopped swinging the sailor.

"No, we're not going to give in; but if you don't let that man go I'll shoot you as dead as a coffin nail!" cried Jack in a resolute tone, covering Bimbo with the muzzle of his rifle.

CHAPTER XVI.—The Treasure of the Stranded Ship.

"Um shoot me?" he howled.

"Yes, I mean it. Let that man go at once."

Bimbo reluctantly ordered his two followers to untie the sailor. Jack then lowered his rifle. The moment he did so Bimbo sprang into the underbrush, and the black followed, dragging the sailor with them. A few moments of silence followed, and then came a series of yells from Jim Bludso.

"Are they torturing him?" said Will anxiously.

Before Jack could reply a dark form came hurtling over the top of the underbrush and fell with a splash into the water.

The three crocodiles made a rush for it as it sank, and a great commotion followed under the surface, which was presently streaked with blood.

"Good Lord!" cried Jack. "They've done it. Fire into the bushes."

As quickly as they could the boys emptied their magazines into the underbrush, and more yells attested the fact that many of the bullets had reached the blacks. The firing awoke Miss Bishop, and she came to the door with a startled face.

"Don't be frightened," said Jack to her; "we're only peppering your enemies."

Inside of ten minutes complete silence reigned ashore.

"They're gone," said Jack.

"And Jim has gone, too," replied Will.

The tragedy cast a temporary gloom over the boys. They said nothing to Miss Bishop about it.

Satisfied that they were comparatively safe, Jack and Will resumed operations on the wreck, with Larry on guard on the forecastle with a rifle, and Miss Bishop on the watch aboard of the yacht.

By noon they had enlarged the hole in the side of the vessel so that they could easily pass in and out of the upper hold where the money was, the lower hold being below the level of the ground in which the hulk was half embedded.

"We ought to try and find the gold and get it aboard the yacht first of all," said Jack.

"Well, let's hunt for it, then," replied Will.

After uncovering ten bags of silver they came to an ironbound chest.

"The gold is in that chest," said Jack in a tone of satisfaction.

"What are we going to do to get it open?" asked Will at length.

He banged away at it for a while, but without result.

"I guess we'll adjourn for dinner. It's nearly three o'clock," said Jack.

During the meal they discussed the obstacle they had run against and various suggestions were advanced for overcoming it. After a good rest they tackled the chest again. Finally it showed signs of weakening around the big lock. Encouraged by this they redoubled their efforts, and at length smashed in the lock. Lifting the cover in triumph numberless small fat bags were exposed to their eager eyes.

"Hurrah!" shouted Will in great glee.

"How much do you suppose these bags are worth?" asked Will.

Jack held it up and tested its weight.

"I should imagine about £1,000 or \$5,000," he said.

"And the chest is full of them," said Will.

That was evident. The rest of the afternoon was spent in carrying the gold aboard the yacht and stowing it away in the vacant compartment under the cabin floor. After filling that to the brim they piled the rest of the bags into the lockers, which were emptied of their contents for the purpose. Altogether they counted 200 bags, representing a probable value of \$1,000,000. They then hauled the yacht off into the stream and passed the night without alarms. Next morning they began carrying the silver coin aboard in a pan and emptying it loose into the remaining locker, into several boxes they had, and finally on the floor for want of a better place. They got the contents of three of the ten bags on board when Jack called a halt.

"That's as much as we dare take with us," he said. "Even as it is we're overloaded."

So it was reluctantly decided to abandon the rest for the present. In one respect they were not sorry to quit work, for it was stifling hot. There was not the least air moving, but by means of a pole they had cut for the purpose they shoved the yacht off into the stream, where they proposed to wait for a breeze to take them down to the river. An hour passed and the party were sitting down to dinner when suddenly the creek became agitated and the yacht began to rock to and fro like a cradle. Larry rushed into the cockpit, followed by Jack and Will.

"The saints preserve us! Luk! Luk!" cried the Irish boy, pointing in terror at the wreck. It was shivering as with ague and dropping apart. Then all at once the hold disappeared, as if swallowed up, and the waters of the creek rushed in over it like a sluice.

"It's an earthquake!" cried Jack.

In a few minutes the convulsion of nature subsided and a breeze came over the landscape, catching the sail and sending the boat ahead.

Three days later they put in at Coomassie for fresh supplies, but they took care not to give out a hint about the treasure of the "Windsor Castle" they had in their possession. Then they sailed along the coast for Monrovia, where they arrived in due time. Taking Hattie Bishop with them, Jack and Will went ashore and called at Consul Bishop's office. When he saw his daughter he sprang to his feet and clasped her in his arms. It developed that a messenger had just arrived from Kumassie with word of her capture and the terms of the ransom demanded. Explana-

tions followed, and Mr. Bishop thanked the boys, particularly Jack, for the part they had played in the rescue of his daughter. Then they astonished him with their story, particularly that part concerning the treasure of the "Windsor Castle." He could hardly believe them, but they carried him aboard the yacht and showed him the money in every part of the cabin. The money was deposited in the biggest bank in Monrovia, but before that was done Will sent a cable message to his father stating their present whereabouts. Their story was published in the papers, and hundreds of people visited the little American yacht which had performed such an unprecedented feat. The British government took cognizance of the treasure and put in a claim for one-tenth of it, the value of the whole being estimated at \$1,300,000. The English claim, being a lawful one, was allowed, and the balance was apportioned as follows: \$500,000 to Will, the owner of the yacht; \$400,000 to Jack; \$250,000 to Larry, and \$20,000 to Hattie as a present from the boys. In return she gave her heart to Jack, who carried it away with him when the three boys started by steamer for England, after engaging a skipper and two men for a liberal compensation to sail the "Sunbeam" to New York, where it duly arrived. Great was the reception that Will and Jack received from their respective families when they arrived by steamer in New York, and they were heroes among their acquaintances for many a day afterward.

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Charlie Cooper's Curves

or

THE STAR PLAYER OF THE UNKNOWN NINE

By Gaston Garne

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER IX.

The Plot That Failed.

But it was Fred Roberts's suggestion, so he did not raise any objections.

The pitcher for the Patersons that day was a Cuban, and it was said that he was a cracker-jack.

But at the third ball pitched to him our hero hit out a safe one to right field and reached first.

Ben Handy came next and cracked out a good one and advanced Charlie a base.

Joe Murray followed with a sacrifice and Charlie and Handy went around an other peg.

Harrington struck out, so that made two out and the second and third bases filled.

Mike Reilly made a scratch hit, and on account of the pitcher trying to catch Charlie napping at third, reached first, filling the bases.

It was an exciting moment, for there was a possibility that the visitors would get in a run.

It was just at this minute that Fred Roberts caught sight of Neville, as he took a seat near him on the grand-stand.

The manager promptly went over to him.

"A hundred dollars that the Unknowns score in this inning!" he exclaimed.

"I'll take that," said the black-bearded man.

The money was hardly put up when Harry Hodge sent out a liner, over the head of shot, and in came Charlie Cooper like a steam engine.

He crossed the plate, and thinking he had time to get there, too, Ben Handy made a sprint for home.

But the catcher got the ball in time to put him out, and that wound up the Unknowns' half of the inning, with one run to their credit.

Roberts had won his bet, and as he took the money from the man who held the stakes Neville looked at him as though he would like to grip him by the throat.

But the manager of the Unknown nine simply smiled.

"I am either running in a streak of good luck, or I have really got a team of world-beaters, as I have advertised them to be," he observed.

"Well, I would not bet with you again, not if I was sure of winning," retorted the black-bearded man.

"I shan't ask you."

Charlie Cooper now stood in the box, and as the umpire tossed the ball to him Roberts called out:

"Let them hit the ball a couple of times, Charlie. I want to see how well the boys can support you."

The young pitcher nodded.

He did just as the manager told him, for he

sent in a straight ball that was directly over the plate for the very first one.

The Paterson batter accepted the chance and sent the sphere skyward.

Dan Haypole, the gawky-looking center-fielder, saw the ball was his, and he ran back to get under it.

The batter got to first before the ball came down, so fast did he sprint.

But that was all there was to it. Maypole raked the fly in as though he was only too glad to get his hands on it.

"Out!" shouted the umpire.

As the next man stepped up Charlie decided to give him an easy one, too.

Whack! There was a report like a pistol as the bat hit the ball and away it soared for left field.

But Carl Schmidt was right on hand, and though he barely got it with one hand, the fly was landed in proper shape.

Two out! And the Paterson players were hitting the ball hard.

"Try it once more, Charlie," said Harry Hodge from his position at short. "It will do the boys good to have a little exercise out there. I would not mind having a red-hot grounder to handle myself."

The young pitcher nodded.

Then he sent in a wide curve, just for a change.

It did not fool the batter and a ball was called.

The Paterson team had plenty of rooters. They made the field ring with their shouts of encouragement.

They wanted to see a man get on first.

The next ball Charlie sent in had a slight in-curve to it, and it was just right to hit, but not for a fly.

The boy did it purposely in the hope that a grounder would go to short.

He got just what he wished for.

The batsman hit it hard and the ball struck the ground about ten feet to the left of the pitcher's box.

Hodge ran to meet it and caught it on the second bound.

Whiz! Joe Murray had it in his hands at first before the batter was half-way there.

A whitewash for Paterson.

The second, third and fourth innings furnished goose-eggs for both sides, for Charlie settled down to business and struck the batsmen out one after the other, and the Cuban pitcher got in some very good work.

While this was being done the villain Neville was working another plan to injure Charlie Cooper.

He left the grand-stand the minute the first inning was played and departed from the grounds.

Boarding a trolley car, he rode down to the thickly-settled part of the city and finally brought up into a saloon of questionable repute.

He walked into the rear room just as though he knew exactly where he was going, and there who should he find but Bill Butts.

Butts was pretty sober just then, which seemed rather strange, since he was well supplied with money.

The black-bearded villain sat down at the table with his hired tool and ordered drinks.

When they came, and he had paid for them, he looked around, and finding that they were the

only ones in the room, since almost everybody was at the ball game, he said in a low tone:

"Betts, you saw the autos that the Unknown nine came to Paterson with this noon?"

"Yes," was the reply, "I seen 'em."

"You know which one Charlie Cooper rode in, don't you?"

"Yes, I took note of that, Mr. Neville."

"Well, when they get in to leave the grounds after the game, I want that particular auto to blow up—do you understand?"

"It might kill all that's in it," exclaimed Butts, looking scared.

"I can't help that. I want Charlie Cooper to die, and if there are others to go the same way I can't help it. I won't tell you why, but I know for a certainty that Charlie Cooper will be my ruin if he is allowed to live. Now, the thing can be done very easily. I bought the article that will do it yesterday, right here in Paterson. I was lucky enough to run across a man who is an out-and-out anarchist, and he was glad to give me what I wanted for the small sum of five dollars. The explosive has a slow fuse to it that will burn twenty minutes. You must light the fuse and get the infernal machine in that auto right under the middle seat. Do you understand?"

"Yes, boss, I'll do it."

"All right. It is a safe way to do the trick, for the explosion will be laid to the gasoline that is stored in the machine. Now, here is a false beard; put it on by and by and come over to the grounds. I will meet you there and give you the bomb. I will be close to where the two autos are, so you can't miss it."

"All right, boss. You kin depend on Bill Butts every time."

"I know I can, and if you will only serve me right I'll make a rich man of you."

They had another drink apiece, and then, after he had told him once more what he required him to do, Neville got up and left the saloon.

Meanwhile the game at the ball grounds was progressing nicely.

In the fifth inning the Unknown nine scored another run and their opponents were blanked.

In the sixth Charlie Cooper was the first to bat again.

The pitcher tried hard to strike him out, but it was no go, and Charlie got to first on a neat single.

Then Ben Handy struck out.

Charlie stole second at the first ball that was pitched to Joe Murray, and a deafening cheer from the crowd was his reward.

Then Harrington came up and surprised himself by welting out a two-bagger.

A wild throw to third let Charlie in, giving them three runs to their credit.

Then Reilly and Hodge both fanned out and the side was retired.

Charlie decided to let them hit the ball again in this inning.

He was sure that they could win, anyhow, and he did not care if they did get in a run or two.

It is not good policy to be over-confident, but he was so sure that he held the game in his hands that he was not afraid to risk letting them hit the ball.

The result was that a coming fly went out be-

tween left and center which neither Schmidt nor Haypole could get.

The batter got second on the hit, and the Paterson rooters fairly yelled themselves hoarse.

"I guess I had better look out," thought the star player of the Unknown nine. "I didn't exactly expect that."

He struck out the next three men in short order.

It was then that Fred Roberts offered to bet a thousand dollars that Paterson would not score during the game.

The best he could get was a two-hundred-dollar bet, and he took it smilingly.

Charlie heard the bet made, and he decided that the manager must win it.

The Unknowns failed to score that inning, and it was the same way with their opponents.

In the eighth a Paterson man got as far as second, but he died there.

The Unknowns succeeded in getting the bases filled, with two out, in their half, but the Cuban pitcher played steady ball and no runs were scored.

"I think we had ought to have just one more run," said Harry Hodge, as he stepped up to bat at the commencement of the ninth.

He started off as though he meant it, too, for he belted out a neat single and reached first.

Carl Schmidt followed with a sacrifice and sent him to second, and then Haypole made a long drive over right field and Hodge scored.

But that was all they got.

The score stood four to nothing, and when Charlie walked to the pitcher's box he meant that it should remain that way.

And it did, too, for he struck out the first three men to come before him.

Paterson had been treated to a surprise that it would not soon forget.

The ball team was not long in getting to the two autos after the game was over.

As Charlie took his seat at the side of the fair Marjorie West he detected the odor of smoke.

It came from beneath him, he thought, and as the chauffeur put the machine in motion he looked down and saw a faint stream of smoke coming from under the leather covering of the front of the seat.

As quick as he could he pulled the leather covering aside and saw an oblong object with a burning fuse attached to it.

Charlie Cooper was naturally a very cool boy.

He knew that danger lurked in that mysterious smoking object, and without a word to any one, he grabbed it and hurled it from the auto.

As the object struck the ground twenty feet away there was a loud explosion and the air was filled with smoke.

CHAPTER X.

Neville And Bill Butts Go To Yonkers.

Bill Butts had carried out the instructions of Neville to the very letter. The bomb had been placed in the auto, and directly where it would do the most harm.

Neville and his hired tool stood near the grandstand, watching the baseball party as they got

into the machines that were to bear them away from the grounds.

Neville craned his neck when he saw Charlie Cooper suddenly stoop and seize something that was in the auto and hurl it from him.

Bang! It was then that the explosion took place.

"It has failed, Bill!" exclaimed Neville hoarsely, as he saw both autos come to a sudden stop and a crowd rush for them. "Charlie Cooper got onto our game, and he picked up the bomb and fired it out just in time to save himself. We must get away from here, Bill. Keep your false beard on and mingle with the crowd. Meet me at the saloon as soon as you can get there."

Then the villainous conspirator was gone.

Bill Butts followed the rush that was made for the scene of the explosion, and during the excitement managed to sneak off and board a car.

When he finally reached the saloon he found Neville there.

The man was playing a game of billiards with a stranger, whom he had picked up in the place, and, to all appearances, he had never dreamed of there being such a thing as an explosion on the ball grounds.

But Bill Butts heard everybody talking about it as he entered the saloon, and he felt in anything but an easy frame of mind, for he knew that if it was discovered that he was the miscreant he would surely land at the State's prison.

He did not interfere with his employer, but ordered a drink and sat down and watched the game.

It was really wonderful that the black-bearded man could play the game so coolly, considering what he had done but a short time before.

But he made the shots just as skillfully as though his life depended upon it, and he won the game with ease.

The stranger evidently took him for a sharper, for he declined to play any more.

Then Neville motioned for Butts to follow him, and left the place.

"Butts," he said, "we leave Paterson for Yonkers to-night. The Unknown nine is to play there Decoration Day, which is Monday, and we want to get acquainted with the place before we do anything further. How Fred Roberts managed to arrange a game for that day with the crack Yonkers nine I don't know. But he is a fellow who runs in a streak of luck, it seems. He don't know me, and I don't mean that he shall. But I know him very well, Bill Butts. He stole the girl I was to marry by his smooth and oily ways. I don't mind telling you this, Butts. The woman who is now his wife was engaged to me, but Fred Roberts cut me out. That is why I am bitter against him. Why I want Charlie Cooper put out of the way is another thing. I will tell you that later on. Roberts has won considerable money of me, but I will get it all back before I am through, and have revenge, too."

"I understand," said Butts. "You're a mighty smart man, an' there ain't no such feller as Roberts is—what 'll git ther best of yer—not in ther end, anyhow."

"We will go right to Yonkers to-night, then. But we will make up in a little different style, Butts. I am an adept in disguise, if I do say it myself. I have of time on my hands to finish

the joy I have started to do, since I have sold out my business in New York, and have money on interest. The interest, Butts, is enough to keep a man in luxury, and allow him to waste a great deal of money, too. You are going to get the benefit of what I have got, to a certain extent, if you continue to serve me well. My real name is not Neville, and when I go in the society to which I belong I am thought to be just the right thing in the right place. This world is full of deceit, and I, for one, like to practice it."

"I guess you're ther real thing, boss. I'm mighty glad I got in with you, too. You'll find that Bill Butts will never go back on yer. But say, boss, I'd like ter have about twenty dollars. I got in a crap game this mornin' an' I was a loser."

"All right. Here's the twenty. Now meet me at the depot at seven and we'll take a train for New York. You will know me by the dress-suitcase and small brown satchel, which I will carry in my left hand—both in the left hand, understand. I will be standing near the ticket window at exactly seven o'clock, so don't forget."

"I'll be there, boss."

The two now separated.

Punctual at seven o'clock Bill Butts walked into the Paterson depot.

He looked around and saw a man standing near the ticket window who was attired in a well-worn business suit.

In his left hand he held a dress-suitcase and a small satchel.

But the man did not look like Neville, for he had a blond beard of the Van Dyke style and wore eye-glasses.

Butts looked at him doubtingly for a moment and then walked toward him.

The man with the eye-glasses nodded and smiled, and then the hired villain knew he was right.

"Gracious!" he exclaimed in a whisper. "I wouldn't have knowed yer, boss."

"Well, I told you I was good at disguises. Now you take this satchel and go somewhere and put on the false beard and hat that you will find in it. We have just ten minutes before the train starts. We will manage to get in the same seat, as strangers, if possible, and then everything will be just right."

"All right, boss."

Butts took the satchel and disappeared, while Neville walked out upon the platform and lighted a cigar.

A few minutes later Bill Butts came out.

The soft hat and beard he had put on had changed him wonderfully.

He had placed the cap and other false beard in the satchel and now held it in his hand.

"Did you buy your ticket for New York?" Neville asked in a low tone, without looking at him.

"No, I didn't buy ther ticket, boss; I thought you had done it," was the reply.

"Certainly not. We are supposed to be strangers, until we get acquainted on the train."

Bill Butts turned and walked leisurely into the ticket office.

(To be continued.)

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

STRANGE FOOD

A popular table delicacy in China is "pidan," which is made by preserving fresh ducks' eggs in a paste made from soda, straw ash, table salt, boiling water and slaked lime. The pidan is stored for a month before being used. Experiments have shown that there is as much vitamin A in pidan as in fresh eggs; but vitamin B is entirely destroyed by the process.

FRENCH CAFES CURB FOOD AS LAW OPERATES

The official decree in Paris that restaurants may serve only two dishes at one meal, as a part of the French economy programme, became effective recently. The proposed order received almost as much publicity a short time ago as did the war debts.

The official decree restricting restaurant food exempts hors d'oeuvres, eggs, fish, fowl, desserts and fruit. The new menus still carry eleven or twelve courses, the waiters carefully pointing out that this is within the law.

CONTROLLING FIREFLIES

A firefly can be made to glow steadily for twenty-four hours, instead of flashing on and off, by injecting into it a tiny hypodermic dose of adrenalin. At the end of the twenty-four hours, however, the flies die, apparently exhausted by the large amount of energy put forth. The affect of adrenalin on living tissues is usually to cause intense contraction of the involuntary muscles, and it is thought that this drug, when injected into the firefly, holds rigid the set of muscles that ordinarily relax and contract in flashing on and off the light.

HUXLEY SEES LIFE PROLONGED IN FUTURE

That the span of human life will be gradually extended as the years pass is the prophecy of Professor Julian Huxley, the London eminent biologist, in an essay on "The Meaning of Death," just published.

"By eugenic measures," he says, "we could un-

questionably raise the average span of human life even without further progress in hygiene. If, as we may confidently predict, the present trend of affairs continue, more and more men will attain advanced age, whether naturally or by rejuvenation. The death rate of infants and young people will continue to fall also and as a result we shall in a few decades have a population in which the relative numbers of young and old people will be quite different from the present.

"By that time, perhaps, we shall not be quite so casual about human biology as we are today and will not permit any one, even persons diseased, to have as many children as they choose or allow all and sundry to be rejuvenated any more than today we permit persons to drive where they like on the roadway or go about while capable or spreading infection."

Professor Huxley reaches this conclusion after tracing what happens in the death of trees and the lower forms of life. Of tree life he says:

"There is nothing in a tree that causes its death, merely long continued shocks and buffets of the world, preventable things, one and all. By which I mean that if one could shelter a tree from storms, keep off its active enemies, it would live on."

LAUGHS

Reggie—Did you marry that summer girl you met at Blackpool this year? Waiter—No, I remembered that if I did I'd have to support her this winter.

Mrs. O'Brien—They say it's not polite to be helped twice, Mr. Flaherty, but ye'll take another piece of my cake, won't ye? Flaherty—Indade Oi will that, Mrs. O'Brien. Shure it's the height av politeness to ate a sicond piece av such cake as this.

Mr. Dogbone—You know that silence gives assent? Miss Catnip—I believe it; I know a lot of people who make a loud noise and never give a cent.

"Why do ye look so sorrowful, Dennis?" asked one man of another. "I just hear-r-d wan man call another a liar, and the man that was called a liar said the other mn would have to apologize or there would be a fight." "And why should that make you look sad?" "The other man apologized."

Little Dickie was visiting his grandma, and after lunch she spoke to him about taking his afternoon nap. He looked shyly at her and did not speak. After a short pause she again mentioned his nap, and he said: "Why, grandma, you wouldn't put your company to bed, would you?"

Charles' uncle was a tall man, and one day when he had Charles out for a walk he forgot the length of a child's step, and poor Charles was almost running to keep up. They came to a rise in the grade of the walk and Charles stopped and said: "Oh, uncle, please change into low; I just can't make it on high."

THE BLACK MASK

During the autumn and winter of the year 1818 the country around the ancient town of Louvain was infested by a band of robbers, whose organization was so perfect and movements so sudden and mysterious, that, although they spread death and desolation in all directions, yet the officers of the law failed utterly in all attempts to bring them to justice.

The number of this fearful league was reported to be young men of good family, and the leader was described by common reports as a man of noble presence, joined to a mind dark and cunning, and a heart that was a stranger to remorse or pity.

This formidable band was known far and wide as the "black masks," for all accounts agreed in describing them as clothed completely in black, and having their faces covered with black masks.

However, the mystery surrounding them was dissipated, and their devastation brought to a termination, by the incident I am about to relate.

There lived, at the period to which I refer, in the suburbs of Louvain, a worthy curate, Father Gervaise by name, and with him resided the son of an only sister some time deceased, whose education Father Gervaise had superintended, and whose manhood he watched with almost a father's care.

Growing up, therefore, under the very dome of the church, it is not surprising that Julian de Montessor early displayed feelings and sentiments calculated to inspire in his uncle ardent hopes that he would in time embrace the church as a profession, and great was the worthy curate's disappointment when the youth grew to manhood without expressing any determination to forswear forever the vanities of this wicked world; but still determined not to influence him in the least, the good priest kept his own counsel, satisfied that at all events his nephew's feet would never forsake the straight and narrow path.

At the time of the occurrence of the incident I am about to relate Julian had just entered his twenty-first year.

He was tall, nearly, if not quite, six feet, well-formed, with a face that from a hasty glance would have been pronounced eminently handsome, but upon careful examination an expression might have been traced that would have caused an involuntary shudder to creep over the beholder.

He was also well educated, accomplished and agreeable, so that his company was eagerly sought, more especially by those ladies having marriageable daughters.

Only one thing in relation to his nephew troubled Father Gervaise, and that was his very frequent and prolonged absence at night; but as he always had some plausible excuse, even that ceased after a time to occasion any uneasiness, and the uncle and nephew lived in undisturbed harmony.

One evening in the month of February they were seated together in the comfortable library of Father Gervaise's residence, enjoying the warmth of a blazing wood fire, when a sudden summons came for the curate to attend the death-

bed of one of his parishioners, who lived at a considerable distance.

Without a moment's hesitation this excellent man set forth.

The wind blew fiercely in his teeth, and a dreary sleet drove in his face, but still, with a stout heart, Father Gervaise kept on his way, and in about an hour arrived at his destination.

He was just in time to administer the last rites and consolations of religion to the dying, and after remaining about half an hour he set out on his return.

Fain would his parishioners have prevailed upon him to remain until daylight, holding forth by way of inducement, the dread of an encounter with the "black masks;" but only smiling at their fears, and bidding them farewell, he departed.

The night was far advanced and the way very lonely, but Father Gervaise's heart was a stranger to fear, and he strode on bravely.

He had walked about a mile, when suddenly he was startled from his reverie by the clatter of what seemed a troop of horses.

Pausing, he looked around.

He could see nothing, but still heard distinctly the sound, and all the time it drew nearer.

Presently, however, coming round a turn in the road at full gallop, a party of about a dozen men, mounted on fleet steeds, dashed past him, and through the darkness Father Gervaise was just enabled to distinguish that each rider wore over his face a black mask.

"So I have actually seen the famous and infamous black masks," he thought, as he once more continued on his way.

And he went on contemplating how much he should like to bring the rogues to justice.

He had not proceeded many steps further, before, on passing a house, he was astonished to see a light burning, and the door wide open.

Conjecturing at once that this had been the scene of one of the midnight exploits of the bold robbers, Father Gervaise entered, and his suspicions were terribly confirmed by finding stretched in death across the passage, an aged man, whom he at once recognized as the master of the house.

Only pausing to assure himself that life was extinct, the priest passed on into the main apartment, from which a strong light issued, when what were his horror and dismay by finding the wife likewise brutally murdered, her body lying beneath a table!

Sickened at the fearful sight, the curate was about to hurry out and alarm the neighborhood, when his attention was attracted by a strange gurgling sound proceeding from the chimney-place.

Looking in the direction indicated, his presence of mind entirely forsook him, for there he beheld hanging in sight a pair of feet, which gave several convulsive movements, the gurgling sound still continuing.

Recovering his self-possession, Father Gervaise rushed forward, and found the female domestic of the family suspended by the neck, in the last agonies of death.

To seize a knife that luckily was near, and cut the cord that held her, was the work of an instant, but some time elapsed afterward before

he was enabled to restore her to sufficient consciousness to give an account of the circumstances attending this horrid deed.

The poor girl, on recognizing the good curate, was overcome with strange grief, and hiding her face in her hands, wept bitterly, and for a long time refused to give any account of what had transpired. At last, being earnestly entreated, she, with many sobs, told how the "black masks," some dozen in number, had broken into the house and murdered the master and mistress in cold blood.

She herself had found temporary safety by hiding behind the fireboard, and fancying their work of death accomplished, the ruffians proceeded to ransack the house in search of gold, which was well known the aged couple kept secreted in the building.

Having succeeded in their search, they returned to the room in which she was hidden, in order to divide their booty, and having seated themselves around the table, they all removed their masks, except the leader.

And the poor girl began to relate how, through a crevice in the fireboard, she recognized the countenances of everyone of the robbers that were unmasked, and, to the horror and amazement of the listener, disclosed the names of young men of the highest families before unquestioned.

So eager did the girl become in prosecuting her scrutiny, however, that, leaning too heavily against the screen, it fell forward.

The robbers sprang to their feet and instantly replaced their masks.

Then the leader rushed upon and seized her, already half dead with fright, by the neck.

They consulted together as to the manner of her death, and concluded, with a savage laugh, to hang her by the neck in the place she had chosen to secrete herself in.

Moved by despair at hearing this dreadful doom pronounced, she made one vain effort to free herself, and in so doing easily managed to displace the mask from the face of the chief, and as in a trembling voice she repeated the name of that man, the good curate turned white as death, and fell prostrate upon his knees, with his hands raised to heaven.

The name she uttered was that of Julian de Montessor, his own much-beloved nephew, and so minute was her description of him that he could not but be convinced of the truth of her statement.

Father Gervaise was utterly horrified, but at the same time his sense of justice and duty to his fellow-men told him at once what course he must pursue; so calming himself as well as he was able, he listened to the remainder of her recital as to how they executed their hideous threat, and how then she forgot all things until restored to life by his kind attentions.

When she had concluded her narrative, the good curate placed her in charge of the nearest neighbor, and then, with a heavy heart but firm purpose, set out once more for his home.

Before reaching his own residence he applied to the mayor, and declared to him what he had seen and heard, and requested him to assist him in the plan he had formed to secure the robbers, who, from certain circumstances, he firmly believed to be secreted in his own house.

The mayor, with much prudence, employed every measure suggested by the curate, and, accompanied by a sufficient guard, followed him at a short distance to his dwelling.

The curate, as he anticipated, on entering his library found his nephew apparently watching for his return, and it was with the utmost difficulty that the good man could restrain his emotion.

Making a powerful effort, however, to control his feelings, he told Julian that he had had a very painful visit, and requested him to go to the cellar and bring some wine.

The young man changed color at this unusual request, and hesitated a moment; at which the uncle offered to go himself and fetch it, and in effect rose to execute his design, when the nephew, with great eagerness, sprang to his feet, and expressed himself quite ready to do as he desired.

Taking a light, he passed out of the room and down the stairs leading to the cellar.

No sooner had he done so than the curate locked and bolted the door, and then gave a signal for the mayor and his guard to enter.

They did so at once, having obtained lights, unfastened the cellar door, and were about to enter, when they were set upon by about a dozen men, armed with short swords, dressed all in black, and having their faces covered with black masks.

The struggle, though desperate, lasted only a few moments; the city guards were too numerous for the brigands, and succeeded in capturing every robber alive.

The mayor ordered them to be instantly disarmed, bound in fetters, and conveyed to a neighboring prison, which order was at once obeyed, and shortly thereafter they were all condemned and executed, thus was the country rid of the "black" masks.

NEW YORK-LONDON LINE OF DIRIGIBLES PLANNED

A fleet of enormous dirigibles for travel between New York and London will be built by the Goodyear Rubber Company if the new airship which the Government proposes to build to replace the Shenandoah demonstrates that such a service is practicable.

This announcement was made by P. W. Litchfield, President of the Goodyear Company, who, with his aeronautic engineer, W. C. Young, discussed aviation expansion with President Coolidge in Washington.

"A dirigible of 6,000,000 cubic feet should be able to fly the Atlantic Ocean in two and one-half days or not more than three, and should prove a successful commercial venture in oceanic travel," Mr. Litchfield said.

Mr. Litchfield explained that his company was experimenting in the production of dirigibles now and would watch with interest the building of the Government's new airship which would have a capacity of about 6,000,000 cubic feet.

Mr. Litchfield saw also Secretary Wilbur and Secretary Hoover. He talked with the latter about the Government's plans to establish air routes and encourage commercial aviation.

CURRENT NEWS

COLD LIGHT LENS

A new lens, composed of a liquid inclosed in a container of a concave shape has the property of absorbing heat rays and so producing a nearly cold light that is admirably suited to the treatment of tuberculosis and to the projection of motion pictures.

INVENTS NEW AUTO FUEL

Leo Kimball, a research worker at the Mason laboratory of Yale University, asserts he has invented a new high compression fuel which, as a gasoline substitute, has all the advantages of tetraethyl mixtures and eliminates the danger of lead poisoning from fumes.

Mr. Kimball said that when a recent survey reported that there was only enough crude oil available to last six years at the present rate of consumption, he began searching for an automobile fuel that would be less dependent upon natural resources. He states that his mixture of an artificial fluid and gasoline can be produced in more than double the world's supply of automobile fuel.

WHOOPING COUGH RELIEVED

Can whooping cough be prevented by vaccination? At least, the attack can be made very mild by the use of a vaccine, according to recent reports from Amsterdam, where children from two months to three years old were treated. As soon as symptoms of whooping cough appeared, injections were given under the skin, one every two days. Although the paroxysms of coughing were not eliminated entirely, they were neither frequent nor violent in any of the children.

The preventive doses of the vaccine, given before any signs of whooping cough had appeared, were not so successful. Whether a real preventive of whooping cough can be devised is still doubtful.

THE STORY OF "TRAMP"

He was just a stray dog when he came one night to the house of some kind people who took him in. Later they had to move away but they got him a home with his present owners. He had been called "Tramp," which is not a very good name for a dog who has a home. He is of no particular breed, a little bulldog, a little of everything else, in fact, he is just plain dog, but everyone who loves dogs knows that it isn't the breed, but the dog that counts.

From the very first he liked to be close by the baby and would sit for hours beside the cradle where she slept, and when she was taken out for a ride, Tramp walked sedately beside the little carriage.

One morning both master and mistress went away to do some errands, leaving the baby asleep in its bed, the two older children playing near by, and, of course, Tramp on guard as usual. Suddenly the two older children, both under seven, saw flames at the head of the stairs, and in another moment the whole upper floor was on fire. They screamed and ran out of the house, and the neighbors, hearing their cries, came running into the yard. They reached there just in time to see

Tramp dragging the baby by its clothing. He came out the back door, then he crossed the yard and dropped the child into a snowbank. Brave little dog, his first thought had not been for himself, but for the baby, and seeing the danger which threatened, he had lost no time in bringing her to safety. Since that day Tramp has been considered one of the family, and the best in the house is none too good for him.

GEOLOGISTS SEEK TO LEARN IF SHORE IS SINKING; STUDIES, THAT MAY LAST 25 YEARS, BEGIN SOON

To discover whether the North American Continent is really sinking at the rate of one or two feet a century or whether the effect is merely due to the "warping" of the mean sea level due to inequalities of the coast-line, an important series of shoreline studies will be undertaken along the Atlantic Coast.

The studies will be conducted by the Committee on Shoreline Investigation of the Division of Geology and Geography of the National Research Council.

Studies will be carried on at Jamaica Bay, Eastport, Me., and St. John, N. B. Describing the projects, Professor Johnson said:

"To carry on this work three large tide gauges are now being installed in Jamaica Bay and two in New York Harbor by officers of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey. Comparisons will be difficult because the sea level fluctuates with the restless waves, tides and winds, and twenty-five years of study may be necessary before final conclusions, vitally affecting the public interest in many phases, can be reached.

"Many of the supposed proofs of a recent and continued subsidence of the Atlantic Coast of North America can be interpreted as due to local fluctuations of high-tide level, amounting in cases to as much as several feet.

"Proofs of subsidence, if it exists at all, must be based on a comparison of mean sea level observations made at different periods; and it is clear that the necessary evidence can be regarded as reliable only as it be demonstrated that changes in shore form do not affect the position of mean sea level. At present all arguments for changes in the relative level of land and sea based on observed changes of mean sea level are open to suspicion.

"It is not alone the scientific investigator, the surveyor, and the geodesist who have a vital interest in this question. Every owner of property bordering the sea has an actual or potential interest of no mean importance.

"Where waves are attacking the coast the value of property may in considerable measure be determined by the probable future rate of coast erosion and the consequent nature and expense of the protective engineering works required to check the inroads of the sea.

"Even the title to ownership of property may hinge in part on rates of erosion in the past, as has been demonstrated in recent cases in litigation."

BRIEF BUT POINTED

EARN \$10,000 A YEAR, BUT WANTS ALIMONY

Decision to refuse alimony to Mrs. Adeline De Vorak of Cleveland, Ohio, was arrived at without hesitation by Common Pleas Judge McMahon when he learned the wife was earning \$10,000 a year, while her spouse could show only \$700 profits for the year thus far.

Mrs. De Vorak told the judge she conducts a beauty shop and that her year's receipts were about \$15,000, of which \$10,000 represented profits.

BUTTERFLIES SOAR 20 POINTS AS BERLIN BUG BOURSE OPENS

Butterflies general rose 20 points on the Berlin Insect Bourse, which opened for the first time a few days ago. A number of speculators were caught short on luna moths and were forced to take heavy losses when called.

Dealings in futures were strong and steady, especially in cocoons of African month-end nits and tropical beetles, of which large lots were offered. June-bugs common were slow, and fell four points during the day.

One of the handicaps in the business was the failure of the exchange board to provide proper facilities for displaying the stocks offered, and another was the lack of classification, but the hope is expressed that these would be overcome.

The highest price paid was \$30 for a well-mounted pair of rare Brazilian butterflies.

THE DYNAMOMETER

This device now takes the place at fairs and boat by which the pulling strength of horses, other exhibitions of the heavily loaded stone boat by which the pulling strength of horses, mules, and oxen has been so often tested. It is so constructed that it measures scientifically the sustained pulling capacity of the draught animals hitched to it. According to the conditions of the test it is said "whips and cussings" are eliminated, and the degree of co-operation between the driver and his team disclosed. The chief value of the dynamometer, we are told, lies in the gathering of data on the relation between form and function in draught horses. This data will give breeders of draught horses invaluable information in conducting their breeding operations; and, in time, will conclusively demonstrate the superiority of a definite type and breed adapted for long and arduous draught work.

LEOPOLD MADE UP AS SERVANT TO WIN PRINCESS; PEOPLE TOOK HIM FOR BUTLER OR PANTRYMAN

The wooing and winning of Princess Astrid, niece of the King of Sweden, by the Belgian Crown Prince reads like a chapter from the pages of an old-fashioned fairy story. Prince Leopold won the heart of the Princess, whom he will marry soon, without the outside world knowing anything of his plans. He accomplished this feat by the aid of a servant's make-up.

Details of the Prince's numerous visits to the country home of the Princess's family last sum-

mer have just come to light. Each time the Prince came he traveled third-class on the railway. He dressed so as not to attract attention. From the station he carried his own handbag to the royal house, where he was always welcomed as a guest. Even the sly, gossiping villagers assumed that the modest young man was merely a butler or a pantryman traveling back and forth between the chateau and the capital.

By this strict incognito the future King of the Belgians and the Princess were able to spend many days together in the countryside of Southern Sweden, and there were no whisperings of the likelihood of the royal engagement in either Stockholm or Brussels until the young couple themselves were prepared to "let the cat out of the bag."

IN THE HEAVENS

The only heavenly body which appears to us practically fixed in its position is Polaris, the North Star. It is not an especially bright star, but is easy to locate because it is the last star in the handle of the Little Dipper, and also because the two stars forming one side of the Big Dipper point directly toward it.

Polaris is only 11-2 degrees from the true celestial pole (the imaginary spot in the heavens which the earth's axis, if it were continued outside the earth, would hit). Therefore, while all the other heavenly bodies make a complete circle around the heavens once in approximately twenty-four hours, Polaris makes such a tiny circle that it appears to remain still. If we were at the North Pole, Polaris would be directly overhead and the other stars would appear to swing around the horizon once every twenty-four hours, neither rising nor setting. As a matter of fact, Polaris is moving through space at ninety miles a minute, but it is so far away from us (its light takes fifty years to reach us) that we do not notice it.

The Little Dipper, or the Little Bear (Ursa Minor) swings around in a circle approximately every twenty-four hours, with the North Star as a pivot. At this time of year this constellation dips directly down to the horizon in the evenings and still farther below it travels the Big Dipper, or Big Bear. This is a more brilliant constellation than the Little Dipper, and in its circular journey around the North Star every twenty-four hours it swings so low that it seems to almost graze the earth. To see it during the evening at this time of year we must look low down toward the north horizon.

Of the planets at this time of year Mars and Jupiter hold the stage. Mars rises in the east early in the evening, and as the darkness increases it can be seen clearly on its westward path through the heavens during the night. Like all the planets it follows very closely the track which the sun makes through the sky in the daytime. The reason we cannot see Venus and Mercury well just now is that they are keeping too close to the sun. Jupiter, lagging behind, and Mars, lagging behind still farther, are not engulfed in the sun's light.

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